

NIGHT OF THE  
ECLIPSE

FINAL  
~~PARAMETER~~

PRINTED

VERSION  
(PARTS I & II)

NOT THE  
LIST ON  
THE FOLDER

Night of  
The Eclipse

NIGHT OF THE ECLIPSE

Book IV

BOOK IV19  
CHAPTER 19

The fine weather continued and walking became his only pleasure. He would <sup>get back</sup> ~~return~~ dead-tired in the evening and sit with the others drinking wine sleepily, his nerves exhausted. He found his thoughts were clearer when he walked and that dark notions didn't master him so easily as in a room. Sometimes he set out early in the morning, before Pinkie was up. He would walk along Leadenhall street and the Cornhill past the Bank of England, then down Cheapside to the back of St. Paul's, and from there he would cut up to Smithfields to have a look at St. Bartholomew's church, hidden and silent, at the end of its own walk. Then he would turn south again to Fleet Street and the Strand, go through the Horse Guards' Parade to St. James's Park, where he would sit and watch the ducks for a time, and make the last stage of his journey to Kensington gardens; he always ended there, and the walk was the same every morning. Everything gleamed and flashed in the sun on the way; it was always best during the morning hours; the air was cleaner and the shops and streets had a remarkably country-look; there was a golden bustle everywhere, and the sky looked especially high and blue and spacious above the roofs. Sometimes he took sandwiches, and sat on the grass near the <sup>L</sup>ido, where he'd gone with Hanni; she got little time off, <sup>now</sup> and came to the house less; Pinkie said ~~she~~ she thought <sup>Hanni's</sup> ~~her~~ relation with 'Joe Clockwork' had clicked, and she was spending her evenings with him; so far Dick wasn't 'rattled'.

One morning he was walking near the Serpentine when he saw Pinkie's cousin, Deryk Grysham, strolling along; he'd just walked over the stone bridge and was standing still while some children ran past him. It was a lovely day; the water flashed through the trees, and the sky was a perfect blue, with only a slight warm breeze that stirred the grass now and then. One could hear the splash of an oar from the lake and the dull swishing sound of the traffic behind the trees. Grysham came out of the shadows, one hand idly in his jacket pocket, gazing before him, quite lost, while the children played and shouted near by. He looked drawn into himself as Granville had never seen him before; they'd met a hand-full of times, especially just after he and Pinkie were married; but since then they'd hardly seen each other. The family didn't hang together on the whole; Pinkie's brother Nigel, for instance hardly knew Deryk. <sup>Grysham</sup> ~~He~~ had a long, pale face and gave the impression ~~of~~ <sup>and the same time</sup> of being both massive and fragile; he was quite tall, and broad in the shoulders. There was a certain heaviness in his body, but it was veiled by a frailty of nature. Not that his face had any great delicacy. His nose was long and his jaw heavy, giving his face a formless, ever so slightly coarse appearance when in repose. His eyes had a pale look, tired and not fully open. All his body seemed to be in sleep, removed from the rough air; the delicacy was clearly in him, but he had no really delicate feature. He was strolling along with a slow, pale motion, and seemed to emerge bodilessly from the shadows; Granville had to look twice before he was sure <sup>he was there.</sup> ~~it was him.~~ There wasn't anything unhealthy in his pallor, and <sup>and</sup> he had a <sup>wonderfully</sup> graceful way of moving ~~if one watched him for long;~~ <sup>and</sup> he gave the impression of harmony. It wasn't Dick's deliberate cool harmony, but a real quiet cohesion of the body, by virtue of its withdrawal from the world; Granville had never seen him in repose before, not quite like this, ~~when he thought he was un-~~ ~~seen.~~ He ~~could~~ <sup>remembered</sup> only <sup>him</sup> think of Deryk Grysham in drawing-rooms, smiling and shaking hands, gazing at everyone with eyes that seemed incapable of <sup>sharpness.</sup> ~~sharpness.~~ <sup>but he didn't</sup> ~~wasn't~~ out of place walking by the trees; <sup>yet</sup> ~~but~~ he had an effect

And now Grysham had an effect on the trees round him: he made them seem part of a magnificent park still closed to the public. Granville thought of the gardens of Versailles. Partly it was Grysham's corduroy jacket, which at first sight looked velvet.

They walked towards each other quickly.

"What a wonderful surprise! I'd no idea you were back, Philip!"

They shook hands, smiling at each other, and Granville replied, "Yes, about two months ago!"

Grysham was so effusive that he felt ashamed of the weakness of his own feelings: he only felt a mild affection; also excitement, perhaps, at being with one of the Gryshams again---they all had such a glow and style! Though Deryk and ~~her~~ his mother Beatrice were looked on as outposts of the family---too tidy and conscious of rank! That was because Beatrice was 'trade'---she was more Grysham than the Gryshams, the family said. She was a flashing, wild, haughty woman---but also carefully underneath her style---a snob from top to toe.

In Grysham's gaze now there was mingled admiration, curiosity and a subtle glittering look of being complimented by Granville's presence.

"Isn't it lovely?" Granville said, nodding towards where the sunlight flickered on the water, through the leaves.

"Isn't it? I couldn't bear my room any more! You look awfully well," Grysham ~~said~~ added, giving him a side-glance. "How's Hester?"

"You look awfully well," Grysham told him, giving him a side-glance.

"How's Hester?"

"She's fine!"

h.p. <sup>The name</sup> 'Pinkie' was unknown to <sup>he and his mother</sup> Beatrice and Deryk; <sup>they</sup> always said Hester. Granville tried to think of something more to say but couldn't, and they continued along the path; he added that <sup>Hester had</sup> she'd got nice and sunburned in the Middle East, but stopped there. He felt quite tongue-tied but yet easy <sup>as</sup> well: there was something so foreign to him in Grysham, he himself had been away so long and in such a different world, that he felt a fascinated curiosity towards the other man, as if he himself was cancelled out and calmly listening to Deryk's being, that took shape <sup>at his side,</sup> before him, helped by his silence; <sup>two years ago</sup> before, <sup>he</sup> Granville would ~~always~~ have forced the conversation along, believing that this was expected of him; he'd always been nervous with <sup>Deryk's mother</sup> Beatrice; he'd always felt too fired and stimulated socially, because of <sup>her</sup> their gushing charm, for <sup>and</sup> this drowsy, inquisitive calm to be possible. It was like being drawn into a strange, vivid country now, where he only had to watch and listen; he was no longer involved; what Beatrice or Deryk thought of him didn't matter so much; they had less power to hurt; their exclusion of him, if that had ever been in their minds, seemed not to concern him, but to be about an idea of him from which he in himself was immune; he hadn't heard the word 'background' for <sup>two</sup> years or more! He was thus less in awe of Deryk. A glow had come into his own life which he held intact; he'd tasted friendship; he deliberately remembered Mohammed as they walked along, as a protective device; ~~He had a world he could describe; it was mysterious to Deryk;~~ <sup>He</sup> clung to the memory of Basrah! He felt nervous apprehension threaten to mount in him for a moment, ~~from a devilish reassessment of the past~~ had tempted to come out; he'd always felt feathers in the belly before seeing Beatrice, because of her terrific social requirements of wit and constant talk, which he'd always found, once he'd steeled himself to them, that he enjoyed fulfilling; but now he steeled himself the opposite way, to calm; with nothing to say he

said nothing! ~~It was the first time in his life he'd done this consciously; it was his first step towards a manner of conversation that was ~~quite~~ foreign to him, and which had cost him so much stumbling; hitherto, he'd always hung on people's words and hurried to reply, usually without thinking, much as the women in Abbott's Road did when they hung on the gate; that had meant frightful rebuffs for him, and a sense of showing himself naked, while other people were taking pains to cover themselves all the time; this was what Deryk did naturally now---he clothed himself all the time when he talked; his ease of manner came from having been brought up to do so, though, did Beatrice but know it, it wasn't an aristocratic habit.~~ And Deryk <sup>seemed to</sup> sensed something new in him; his tone was more confidential than Granville could remember it, with less deliberate charm and <sup>r</sup>courtesy; they were on an equal footing. Granville was aware that this calm he had, which he knew wouldn't last long, might be his first glimpse of maturity, as he would have to find it in the world he'd <sup>graduated to</sup> inherited; it had something to do with the defeat of pride in himself; he would have to learn how not to care what people thought of him; then he would be able to rest, and watch and listen; he would allow his own self to reside elsewhere, intact; and that would take much construction---perhaps years more.

~~Deryk said how frightfully tired Beatrice got these days, she didn't get younger, poor darling!~~ And Granville <sup>then he</sup> glanced at him <sup>quite</sup> sideways, just as he'd done before; the childish repose had quite left his face; he still had the meditating look but it was <sup>more</sup> alert ~~with anxiety~~ now. The carriage of Deryk's head was like a sea-horse's, uplifted, his eyes half-closed in a sleepy, pale surveillance, his nose long and also pale, seeming to overhang his lips. He could remember the first moment Deryk had opened the door of the top-floor flat to him, a few weeks after he and Pinkie were married; he remembered the ~~same~~ sense <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ being incorporated into some grand and blazing activity, which never quite came about; <sup>however;</sup> it was in his <sup>Deryk's</sup> delighted smile as he stretched out his hand---to his 'favourite' cousin's husband--- <sup>with,</sup> "How very nice to meet you! Do come in!" The hall was ~~small~~ and

"What's the work like out there?" Deryk asked him.

"Oh---it's fascinating!"

He made the words up, and smiled. And now a return-question was required of him: "How's the school?" Deryk worked in a school where his mother had a money-interest.

"Oh! I'm always thinking of giving it up---travelling! But---!"

Granville glanced at Deryk quickly---suppose he had failed to understand Deryk?---suppose they had equal desires, only on two sides of an immense gulf planted by history?

"Do you want to travel?" he asked quickly.

"Yes, I'd love to!"

"Why don't you come out to the Middle East?"

"I've always dreamed about it---but, you know, Beatrice really couldn't get on without me---at the school for one thing!"

"Why don't you try it? You could send the money home!"

"I know!" Then a charming smile, which seemed to make it all make-believe---everything he'd been saying.

"You could easily find some work out there!" Granville went on, persisting deliberately.

And Deryk's smile faded a little. The little formula of charm had been disturbed. "Yes!"

"Why don't you do it?" He persisted further, forcing himself to it with a hard directness while---absurd!---beginning to quiver ever so slightly inside, with apprehension---from breaking the little formula that the other man insisted on with all his soft, casual being like a pale weight in the sunlight.

"Perhaps I will one day," Deryk replied. That was a little patronising. And the smile had almost quite faded. There was even the slightest edge of ---nastiness? But no---perhaps a delicate sour distaste.

Slowly the old clouds, which he'd all but forgotten, gathered in Granville again. He began to remember the past. Partly it was Deryk's accent, which was like a deliberate attempt not to speak the language of ordinary men, with 'rarely' for 'really' and a painful 'ee-ow' for 'oh', an accent that seemed to say, 'I was paid for!' Granville fought against it, reminding himself of Basrah and trying to keep the idea of Deryk as someone foreign to him, and also mysterious. Partly he succeeded as they walked along together under the

trees with the children's voices behind them. But the memories became more and more detailed---of a slight rudeness here, of a sudden harsh sneering sentence from Beatrice; the 'lady', a look of horror on her face when he mentioned his mother casually in a conversation---the horror really had made her face seem to fall into her chin! vAbsurd, dead, historical, but here they were coming up like steam from Deryk's presence at his side! Was he slowly recapturing that old sense of being favoured by Deryk---was that the web he and Beatrice weaved on their visitors, was that the costly invisible article they were still trying to sell in a world which had flung them off as far as authority was concerned fifty years ago!

Behind them was the inner citadel of power, and they held the keys---that was the idea you were supposed to get. But you were never let in. So the dream was always to hover before you.

Deryk had his pale hands behind his back, idly clasped together. They came out into an opening where a hill rose steeply, smooth and green, and the warmth of the sun had collected there, in the hollow, full of hot, dusty scents. He seemed like other men---lost in thought, kicking slightly at the gravel with his foot, but as if he were off-duty in some way: his fragility wasn't that of the drawing room for the moment, but more childish---he might be a child kicking at the gravel, rather bored! His eyes had a childish, dreamy quality, too, without anything self-protective in their look. His jacket was a deep wine-colour, and his grey trousers had lost their crease; he was untidy but yet he had an air of clean, fastidious detachment. His shoulders were bowed wearily. Granville had an impression of a child alone in his own park, pouting a little, sad and frightfully lonely, wondering what had gone wrong, because this was a public park and all the world roared close by. Suddenly ~~Deryk's eyes met~~ <sup>their eyes met</sup> and ~~his eyes~~ <sup>Deryk's gaze</sup> changed at once, the dimness left ~~his eyes~~ <sup>his eyes</sup> like something falling into the sea, a shadow, replaced with a look of gentle solicitude---yes, was Granville about to ask a question?

Granville's heart was moved at once. He had the sensation ~~of~~ that there was a special recognition in Deryk's eyes at that moment, perhaps because they were in--well, the same family! He suddenly blamed himself for the dark thoughts he'd just had, and for the absence in his life of this light courtesy! When Deryk shook hands with someone his expression was extraordinarily gentle and delighted,

and humbly solicitous. His whole body seemed made for courtesy, and one couldn't imagine that he had a dark thought, much less a censorious one. His eyes filled with light as if the social command had become the natural one for him. He disclaimed self when he talked to people, too---it was all "How wonderful!" and "No, really?" and "How very nice for you!" And when he did bring <sup>in</sup> his own life he made ~~that~~ it seem like a game, something you didn't bother about. He ~~seemed to~~ smooth <sup>ed</sup> the path all the time, nodding and smiling, calling the other person on. But---it didn't go all the way through. You were left ~~at the end~~ with the feeling that he and Beatrice would tear you to pieces as soon as your back was turned.

He remembered their ~~that~~ <sup>house</sup> so well---the hushed anteroom of the citadel of power!---the thick ~~carpets~~ carpets, the white, curving bannisters, the dim and heavily curtained drawing room that seemed to promise everything, the dead-white walls because that was the only colour you could furnish to, ~~and~~ the great ~~porcelain~~ porcelain bowl ~~that~~ from Aldercote that shone from one of the tables, ~~and~~ the deep arm-chairs where you sank down, the striped chintz everywhere, ~~and~~ then Beatrice ~~got up~~ <sup>rising</sup> from an armchair <sup>as you came in</sup> with a mighty rustle and sweep, always in a long, flowing gown that shone and ~~glittered~~ glittered in the dim light. Yet she was robust as well, with thick arms and a determined chin. Her eyes sparkled at you, gleeful and challenging, black, with a tiny light of irony in them. Her dress was always cut low, and the lights were arranged to take twenty years off her age, which they did, giving her skin a marvellous, soft, healthy glow, with nothing pinched or thwarted. She had the habit of giving you an admiring nod every now and then, ~~whether~~ <sup>even if</sup> she ~~was~~ <sup>wanted</sup> talking to you, ~~or not~~, together with a wide smile that had something roguish in it, ~~making~~ <sup>her teeth shine</sup> ~~her teeth shine~~. She had blonde, unruly hair and together with her ~~sharp~~ <sup>sharp</sup> nose it gave her an eagle-look, especially as ~~she~~ had the habit of darting her head from side to side as she switched her gaze. Her lips were full and open, yet gripped firmly in sensual will, with something flirtatious and conniving ~~in~~ in them.

Beatrice loved rank ravenously, almost with an innocent passion. Knowing <sup>that</sup> somebody was a lord or higher (lower she didn't go) made them seem extraordinarily beautiful to her, and she really did look at them with sexually admiring eyes, even if they were a lady or a duchess.

When she was with Pinkie's uncle, Maimbury, she laughed and threw back her head, and all her wit came out---she would flash him glances, and dim lights seemed unnecessary <sup>then,</sup> because her skin vibrat <sup>naturally</sup> ed with youth. By the same token she hated the absence of rank in people. She couldn't respect them. But, more than that, she couldn't forgive them. She simply was unable to. There was no dream there for her.

She had a wonderful way of talking about the family. Did Pinkie know that one of her cousins was marrying the marquis of Averdale next year? Such a clever, charming girl! And had Philip been introduced to the Wynters girl? That must be arranged! They'd adore each other---she knew that! And she would look across at Deryk and say, "Don't you think so, darling?" and he would answer, "Yes, mummy!" It never was arranged. But the promise was intoxicating. Beyond Beatrice you always saw a country mansion with tall lighted windows ~~peeking~~ peeping through the cedar trees. Then it would be, "Your grandfather adored you when you were small," to Pinkie, smiling brilliantly. "Clive took your grandmother down to Aldercote that summer, do you remember, for the last time, she died the same year Pamela was born--- I always remember Pamela in her baptism clothes, she made such a lovely baby!" Or, "That was before your father sold everything up, when we always went down to Beeches for July and August, do you remember, darling?" <sup>And so the web was spun, closer and closer with every visit.</sup> ~~She would ask about the house in Chaworth Road. Did they need any furniture? They ought to have that old commode down at Aldercote, it was standing in a corner unused!~~

~~withxxxxxxxixixixixshxxxxpanxxxxwebxxxxxxxxxxxandxxxxxxx~~

"Hester must be looking well after all that sun!" Deryk said.

"Oh, yes!"

"Isn't ~~xxx~~ it rather too hot <sup>sometimes!</sup> about now?"

"Well," Granville replied, "you can always go for a dip in the swimming pool---you don't dream of working after eleven in the ~~in~~ morning!"

"Oh! Is that a company pool or--?"

"Well, it's a kind of club run for the oil people mostly, and we've got membership cards. <sup>?)</sup> ~~(whichxxxxincidentallyxxxxyouxxxxjust lostxxxxhe thought)xxx~~ He was just about to add that they'd ~~also~~ lost their membership cards when he cut himself short, knowing too well the hot feeling of regret that might result if he let his words rush on without preparation, whatever the words were!

"Isn't it difficult for an English woman---moving about freely, that sort of thing?" Deryk asked him.

"Well, it isn't easy but you get more and more women without the veil. They're quite used to seeing English women. They think they're all mad anyway."

"Oh!" Deryk chuckled in a breathless way. "And you work with Arabs, do you?"

"Oh, yes!"

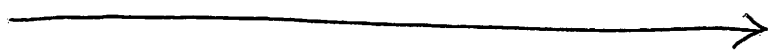
"It must be a wonderful life, Philip," Deryk said quietly.

They came to a stone bridge with fat pillars where there were people leaning on the parapet gazing down into the water, silent. The stream was very still below, touched at the edge by willow ~~XXXXXX~~ branches. The sunlight cast the design of the pillars on to it, and these shadows trembled with the breeze sometimes; or a fish passed swiftly across.

"Are they trout?" Deryk said, peering down.

"They look like it!"

Two or three fish darted under the bridge, their bodies silvery blue. Further on they could see boats out on the Serpentine, moving slowly, without a sound from any of them; nearer the bank there were toy yachts, their sails a dazzling white as they went up and down on the tiny waves; far on the other side they could see people diving into the water at the Lido, white bodies streaking down and making a splash, with the trees where he and Hanni had sat making a dark cave-like hollow behind.

They came to a man launching a toy ship from the bank, with a crowd watching him. The little vessel had three funnels and was worked by radio. Some of the people watching were dressed for the office, in dark winter suits. 

→ The man started the engine by pulling at a piece of cord, then he pushed the boat carefully away, giving it a final little shove with the tips of his fingers; he was a small man with a wrinkled, pale face and freckled hands, ~~and he was~~ utterly absorbed in his task, the stub-end of a cigarette forgotten in the corner of his mouth, brown and dry. As the dignified little ship went smoothly out, keeping a straight course and sending out a surf on either side, he bent down to <sup>the</sup> an instrument like a radio, <sup>which had</sup> with an aerial and three or four <sup>dials</sup> knobs. <sup>And</sup> <sup>then</sup> with <sup>these</sup> he controlled the <sup>boats</sup> direction, <sup>so that it</sup> of the boat, which moved out heavily, as if ~~it was~~ massive, still going a straight course; but then ~~one of the knobs was turned and~~ it veered heavily round, gleaming in the water. The port-holes and cabin windows flashed as it turned, and all the time the man kept his head bowed, only lifting his <sup>gaze</sup> head slightly to look out for other boats, his hand on the <sup>dials</sup> knobs. The only noise from the lake was the muffled bumping of an oar now and then on <sup>a</sup> rowlock, far out, and the flapping of the tiny yacht-sails. Again Granville glanced at Deryk and was surprised to see that he was rapt and fascinated like every one else in the crowd; <sup>again</sup> he was like a child, ~~for a moment.~~ He turned and asked Granville with a smile, did he think the man came here every day? And then he said, "He must be a happy man, don't you think?" <sup>Deryk said with a smile.</sup> There was the same wistfulness Granville had noticed before; he was bereft of <sup>a tangible self</sup> ~~anyself~~ and looked extraordinarily lonely.

~~Granville asked him as they walked away if he enjoyed living in London, hoping for the kind of relations he'd just made about his own life, but Deryk only said that it got awfully wearing sometimes and he wished he could get away, but the school holidays were good; he mustn't grumble at that; and he turned to Granville with a final air, smiling brilliantly like his mother, as if to say, as always, what a game life was, wasn't it? It quite elated Granville to think they'd got so close to each other; were the old inequalities ruled out? Would they be able to talk to each other about their own lives, and their fears on each side? How fascinating that would be! They reached the point where they'd met each other, and where the children still played,~~

"Do you enjoy living in London?" Granville asked him as they walked away.

"Well, it's awfully wearing sometimes but the holidays are good--- I do get long holidays, that's one advantage of teaching!" And then, having said this little bit about himself, he turned to Granville with a final air, as if drawing a curtain, and made his little smile ~~as~~ that seemed to say, 'But my life's just a game, what about yours?'

Granville felt suddenly elated---he would really talk to Deryk, he'd get him to tell him about his life and fears, he'd dig further and further down, why shouldn't they be friends, why shouldn't he explore things in this way, why not cut through all this dreariness and formula and set talk that governed everything, that gripped England like a deadly paralysis and which you could see in people's faces! What was there in the air, against that exploration?

They'd come round the park full circle to where they'd met and the children still played. It seemed to finish the conversation, too. They walked on to Alexandra Gate, strolling. They saw two chestnut horses on Rotten Row, under the trees, with women riders in elegant top hats, turning and rearing slightly, their flanks close together, the sunlight going over them in dazzling yellow spots as they kicked up the sand, seeming not move by their own wills but to be in an airy, floating motion like the brilliant shadows all round them.

Well! He and Deryk turned to each other to say good bye. So nice to have met! What about Hester, when was she going to call Beatrice? Then they must both come over! Yes, and Deryk must bring Beatrice over for dinner one evening, Hester would love---and so forth. He hardly knew what he was saying or what he was hearing. He only had an impression of Deryk's face as gentle and solicitous again, smoothing the path, always smoothing the path!

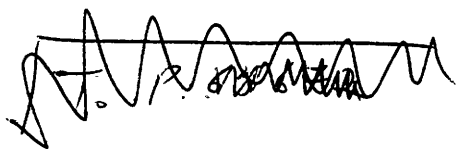
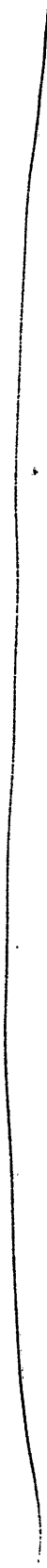
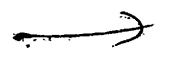
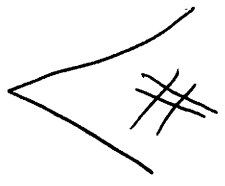
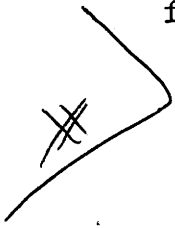
They put ~~their hands~~ out their hands and gave each other a final smile.

"Be sure to give Beatrice our love!" Granville cried, in a last sudden access of affection. "Hester's been meaning to phone for a long time!"

"Do come round and see us! Mummy's going to be so excited when I tell her!"

They walked away in opposite directions---he chose the opposite direction though he was heading the same way as Deryk---and then turned

to wave at each other simultaneously. Granville caught a glimpse of his long pale face again, and his pale fingers as they waved delicately, flickering above Deryk's head for a moment. Then he was gone.



Pinkie's uncle, Maimbury, had a sparkling and golden quality that put people at ease right away. It was this perhaps that Deryk was striving for. Why didn't he attain it? ~~But~~ He didn't---quite. There was something grudging in him---he and Beatrice beckoned you inside but that was also a good way of making you feel shut out as well, especially as there was no inside! All they did, really, was create a ~~fable~~ little fable, and then despise you secretly if you fell for it.

But Maimbury was whole: a still, slim, quietly gracious man with the same unaffected assurance touched with pallor as his son Wynters; only there was more bite to his gaze---he'd made himself one of the richest men in the country and pulled off a good many ~~crisp~~ deals. He was '1911 aristocracy'---~~only~~ <sup>but</sup> his mother was a Grysham; a bit too expensive for ~~the~~ true blue blood, the family said, but good to dine off! He kept his tall London house, that shone like a great white tooth in the sunlight, <sup>partly</sup> as a monument for them and partly as a restaurant---they came in their muddy shoes and dirtied his carpet, Pinkie said, and belched loudly after meals, to the horror of the butler who was also '1911' and was fool enough to think that aristocracy and delicate manners could ever go together!

Well, to some extent they did go together in Maimbury, ~~himself~~. He'd grown up in both worlds---a ~~sort of~~ bankers' world on the one hand and the old lingering world of the country estate (supported by the banks) on the other. He was the effective head of Pinkie's side of the family. Everyone came to him for advice and, of course, money. They brought their bastard children for him to support, and used his name when they were in a tight spot. Family conferences took place between him and Beatrice, who knew better than anybody where the family ~~could be~~ <sup>needed</sup> bolstered <sup>ing</sup> up and patched <sup>ing</sup>. They were always trying to keep the family together. But the family didn't want to be kept together: not unless they could see the money in it! As for a sense of ~~aristocracy~~ aristocracy, they had absolutely none---they didn't know what people meant!

Pinkie had a childish, romantic admiration for Maimbury: it was like her love for Nigel, only Maimbury---'Nicky'---was a debonair figure who 'arranged' everything; he belonged to the world of affairs, and Nigel to nature.

The first real family event after Granville had married Pinkie

was lunch with him. And ~~that~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~had been~~ an extraordinary event, because it showed Granville a world he'd never known before even in his wildest imaginations, an invisible world which Pinkie had renounced in herself. He was always conscious afterwards that she'd renounced the England in herself, the unconscious and dreaming part of her blood, for which she could see no use in the world.

The moment Maimbury had walked across the carpet in the hush of the hotel-lounge Granville ~~was~~ felt at ease, with a strange, immediate, involuntary change of feeling as if the man had brought a new golden light in with him, coming suddenly through the revolving glass door, treading softly, waving his hand in a casual movement towards Pinkie. He ~~wore~~ <sup>wore</sup> his raincoat open and carried an old trilby hat; Granville remembered the way he ~~had~~ swung ~~the~~ <sup>his</sup> hat, with an oddly childish and graceful abandon, so that it was like a school-cap for a moment. His eyes caught Granville's attention next: they were wide-set and still, remarkably placid, as if their physical shape had been determined slowly by quiet, good thoughts. And their original shape seemed to include a smile, which asserted ~~safety~~ safety and calm at once. It was a light, wondering quality, and dominated them all the time they were at lunch. It put Pinkie in a specially gentle and courteous mood, bringing out that invisible element that brooded and slept in her---the ecstatic, thrilling, wild, half-choked way of talking that made her lips moist and full, and put lost, distant, shining vagueness in her eyes as if she was looking back across centuries and everything grand that had ever happened in the country was happening in her again and as if ~~an~~ a natural authority and dominance lay in her body which only had to be called out, like the rustle of silk dress and candlelight and the flash of eyes in the dimness! She and Maimbury made the crowded Oxford Street outside distant, rotten, dead ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> foul, an idiot dream sprayed on the earth ~~in the form of~~ <sup>like</sup> a stink and left to lie for a few decades, not more, before it was smashed to pieces by better hands than had put it there.

Maimbury had taken Pinkie by the hand warmly and spoken in a low, easy voice that at once seemed to establish endless time, "Hester, how are you?", with ~~an intimate glance into her eyes, like~~ <sup>at her</sup> a quick glance to verify she was well. Then he turned to Granville, his eyes measuring him for a moment in a mild, rather passive way,

without scrutiny, absorbing him with an unwatchful calm, and said to him shortly, man to man, "How do you do?" Through the whole lunch Granville kept glancing at Pinkie because of her metamorphosis into a tall, ~~graceful~~ graceful, attentive creature, gazing before her in a dazzled way---into her real self. She had a dark suit on with a red silk scarf loose round her neck which made her face glow and her skin pale and smooth, in a dramatic contrast. She could have been one of the great women of the past---a Holland or Devonshire! It was extraordinary what effect his presence had.

Maimbury's hair was slightly grey at the edges and this made the casual vigour of his body all the more striking. He had a firm, lean face, weathered and lined; everything led to his eyes. As they went into lunch he snapped his fingers and called out "Boy!" sharply to one of the pages, then told him to 'take the gentleman's coat'. For a moment Granville had been surprised, and had stood still in the carpeted lobby---'The man means me!' he thought. It seemed to him then that Maimbury had subtly established equality between them by saying that---<sup>by</sup> making a double announcement, to the page and himself. And the page raced towards him, even before he took Maimbury's coat.

~~to be in deference to himself. Didn't it seem to make an announce-~~  
 ment, to the public, that they were fellow-gentlemen? He thought it  
 was an exquisitely subtle way of establishing deference---it was a  
 double announcement, to the page and himself. And the page raced  
 towards him, even before he'd taken Maimbury's coat, and then a waiter  
~~came forward hurriedly from the dining room.~~ <sup>the dining room</sup> Inside they were  
 handed over to the head waiter, who said quietly, "This way, milord,"  
 and led the way briskly between the tables, whispering to another wait-  
 er in a brittle, narrow-eyed ~~sort of~~ way, "Tell Joe quick---~~the~~  
 Maimbury!" Seats were drawn back from their tables in the corner,  
 they all sat down, and Maimbury took the leather-covered menu in his  
 hand. He glanced down at it and stroked his mouth thoughtfully, lean-  
 ing on his elbow. "Now what shall we have?" he murmured. Granville  
 said nothing. He was <sup>used to</sup> quite accustomed to being confused by wine-names  
 and dish-names at that time, so he decided to leave the talking to  
 Pinkie. She always knew what she wanted and said so, while <sup>he</sup> his usual  
~~tactics were to~~ <sup>would</sup> order the same dish as someone else at the table, say-  
 ing to the waiter after a pause, "I'll have the same!" ~~implying really,~~  
~~no man could do better than that, all things being weighed.~~ Then he  
 just hoped the food would be <sup>all right.</sup> ~~to his taste.~~ Once he <sup>had</sup> ordered  
 escallop in this way---it was one of the few dishes he knew---and <sup>he</sup> got  
 a heap of fish in a sea-shell, <sup>instead of what</sup> which ~~hadn't been his intention at all,~~  
 he'd expected <sup>veal!</sup> He looked down at the fish in a bemused way, try-  
 ing to reconcile it with his <sup>idea</sup> ~~image~~ of veal fired in breadcrumbs, and  
 wondering <sup>whether</sup> ~~whether~~ the waiter had misheard him and ~~whether~~ <sup>whether</sup> the other  
~~guests would notice it if he plunged ahead without saying anything,~~  
 or ~~secondly~~ if his leg was being pulled. Then he caught sight of the  
 card and saw under FISH the word scallop and assumed this must be it.

Apparently, <sup>you could use</sup> the word ~~could be used~~ for both veal and fish. ~~But it~~  
~~rather upset his lunch~~

On <sup>time,</sup> Another occasion, when he was at the TIM training school, he <sup>was</sup> invited to lunch by one of the specialists in Arab affairs. The man had small, gleaming, kindly eyes but he only spoke when he had something intelligent to say, a mannerism which always frightened Granville. Suddenly, between courses, <sup>he</sup> the other <sup>Granville</sup> ~~man~~ looked at ~~him~~ in a calm, rather patriarchal way and asked, "Will you share some plovers' eggs with me?" He decided to nod and smile, as if the thought had occurred to him, too. But he had no idea what the words meant! He thought it might be a wine <sup>and imagined the words as</sup> something like 'Plavers Seggs'. It seemed <sup>all right</sup> perfectly <sup>feasible</sup> 'Plaver Seggs' <sup>'45</sup>. And then the little mottled eggs came, six of them, and he ate three of them with a panic-stricken show of relish.

After a pause Pinkie said to Maimbury, "Well, I don't know a thing about wines for a start, <sup>Nicky.</sup> ~~David~~. So you'd better do the ordering." There, it was perfectly simple! You just had to say it! And Maimbury replied, "Would you like me to order the whole thing?" Granville answered, "Yes, that'd be lovely!" So homely, this idea of the host ordering for everybody! Maimbury gave him an appreciative little glance.

~~The lunch passed well.~~ [Granville <sup>had</sup> noticed for the first time in a restaurant of <sup>this</sup> ~~that~~ kind that he felt no apprehension, nor a sense that he must hang on every word said to him in case he was guilty of a breach of manners. He sat easily in his chair, his elbows <sup>on</sup> the rests, and actually thought about what he was saying---this was perhaps the most amazing thing for him, to actually think <sup>in</sup> a public place with the same unhurried reflection as he did in private! The table

seemed to belong to them, their own, and though the hall clattered and hummed with conversation, the other tables seemed far away, and the streets outside were so remote as to be unimaginable.

He'd forgotten now what they talked about. But an extraordinary graciousness had flowed from Maimbury; it was something rooted and fixed in him, a blessed mark, that could never have been imitated or learned. Granville was astonished how, within a few moments of being in his presence, he felt not only at his ease but washed clean of guile and baseness; it actually seemed, by contrast<sup>56</sup>, that at other times he'd learned to dislike himself! For he settled so comfortably---not proudly or vainly---into his own frame under Maimbury's gaze, and he observed that Pinkie was <sup>doing</sup> feeling the same; ~~the change could be seen in her face; she had authority and command, and~~ her sentences were like trenchant little edicts, uttered blindly, as if from the past, with the vagueness of the past round them, caught in a glow, dramatic, making the present moment seem only a contribution to the slow, legendary movement of time<sup>far</sup> beyond them. And her red scarf marked this more strongly. It was something in Maimbury's smile, and in the soft gaze of his eyes that carried no advance-image of the world but waited in good will for the world to declare itself. Granville only said what he wanted to say, and his silence didn't feel hedged-in and intimidated. It was such a relief---actually being with somebody in a public place and yet keeping intact, without fear! In an epoch when being in public usually meant losing intactness, in the roar of <sup>a</sup> the city! Had the world always been like that, ~~before~~ he asked himself, ~~as it was in Maimbury's presence now?~~ Was it only us, in our world, who underwent a strange psychological shock when <sup>we</sup> went into the company of other people, and uttered things we hardly knew or recognised, and

then, afterwards, felt a sense of betrayal, that we'd departed from  
 ourselves, unawares, and lost the road, as if we'd been bewitched, and  
 odd public statements had been put into our mouths from the air? Was  
 the usual air infectious? <sup>howdays?</sup> And was it ~~not so round~~ <sup>free of that?</sup> Maimbury? Granv-  
 iple had the momentary enchanting experience when he was with Maimbury  
 of discovering goodness in himself---not extra and above what he was in  
 himself---it was simply a recognition of the ordinary goodness every  
 man had, as if hitherto he'd been given a false story, that there was ~~no~~  
 goodness in the ordinary state, no natural goodness inherited by every-  
 one. There were even all sorts of ways of talking and moving which  
 had never appeared to him before; as if hitherto he'd been in the grip  
 of fear, and had been paralysed by the gaze of other men, not conscious-  
 ly any more but in a manner almost physical, certainly automatic, like  
 goose-flesh in sudden cold; sometimes it seemed that he could deduce  
 the presence of other men near him, without seeing <sup>them,</sup> by this automatic  
 response of the flesh. Indeed, it appeared to him that the whole of  
 his life, apart from <sup>the</sup> ~~an~~ interlude in Sussex, had been in a state of fear.  
 Long ago, he'd forgotten what natural behaviour was like, and now <sup>he</sup> more  
 or less accepted a state of self-suspension as the price to be paid for  
 being in public. <sup>And</sup> Now, through Maimbury, he became aware that this  
 might be true of most other people, too: it might be the <sup>state</sup> state of our  
 world. With Maimbury he said whatever thoughts came into his head,  
 as if they were from a mysterious source---mysterious even to him---  
 and not open to the limiting judgements of men; it was a strange free-  
 dom he had never known before, and he was less willing to say after-  
 wards that he lived in a free epoch; for the flesh was in chains, <sup>it was chained</sup> to  
 this throbbing public life that went <sup>round</sup> in a circle and caught us up  
 like a St. Catherine's Wheel, stretching and torturing us, twisting

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our faces and shooting out our hands in peculiar, unwilling gestures. The ~~inner world~~ <sup>ital</sup> self was more or less in abeyance with Maimbury: he was simply a man, Pinkie was simply a woman; there was simply the world, no 'inner' or 'outer', no 'private' or 'public', but people sitting together to eat! Nor was this a primitive sense, of having got behind <sup>d</sup> civilisation to a supposedly untouched and intimate state; it was the reverse---far in advance of anything primitive; it was actually a sense of civilised people---not ~~mentally proficient~~ <sup>clever</sup> ones, or ~~ones~~ of terrific <sup>alls</sup> energy <sup>etc. ones,</sup> or demoniacally astute ones, but civilised ones in a golden way, <sup>in whom</sup> where reason wasn't a faculty of the brain but a sweet power of curiosity and light! That was in Maimbury's face. There were no marks of fear!

Pinkie had once showed him a photograph of Maimbury as a child, standing in a tall hot-house with the rest of his family, dressed in knickerbockers: he had long, fair curls and the wonderful softness was already in his eyes. And it made Granville feel how seldom a child keeps his dream in our epoch, but ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> pinched and limited early, especially a boy, in recognition of the pitiless, dry symmetry of the public world that ~~had to~~ <sup>has to</sup> be observed, requiring stricter gestures than natural ones ever could be, and only certain brain-calculations in place of thoughts, and hard pellets of 'fact' in place of the flowing truth and experience of life! Maimbury had kept his softness. Nothing had been damaged in him; so it was like a glimpse into more golden epochs, seeing him. He'd been allowed his own dignity from the beginning. Perhaps only girls <sup>could grow</sup> ~~would~~ like that in our world; with their graciousness intact in them, and the light of dreaming still allowed in their eyes. Granville remembered all too well in his own childhood how he had always tried to stop the graciousness in his face as much as possible, and to discourage the dream, ~~and the other signs~~

~~of 'flying high', in his expression,~~ in deference to a public world that never made a clear statement of its requirements, only seemed to turn a cold shoulder when he departed from ~~the~~ <sup>this</sup> discipline into natural behaviour. [ This was so wonderful in Maimbury's face---that it had

never been turned from its natural and sweet civilised development. Instead of civilisation being progress or industries or ethical presumption, or ~~something~~ <sup>anything</sup> grandly intellectual and public, it was, in Maimbury, an intimate light that could only be passed from person to person; it was something to do with the heart, <sup>m</sup>inimitable---in every man it would be <sup>a</sup>at different flame---how extraordinary to think that once life had consisted of all these flames, intact, touching and burning and reflecting each other! How exciting it must have been before our epochs came into being! The flame was in Maimbury's movements, in the way he talked and smiled; there was nothing constructed about him; he simply had this shining presence, which couldn't leave him because it was in the shape of his face and the sound of his voice!

Granville ~~thought~~ <sup>thought</sup> of it as 'extraordinary'; but suppose it was what men had inherited in the past as the ordinary course of things, without thinking <sup>about</sup> of it?

~~He began to <sup>suppose</sup> feel that the difference between Maimbury's upbringing and his own <sup>wasn't</sup> essentially one of class, in fact, their worlds were closer than otherwise; his own mother <sup>had</sup> encouraged the softness in him as a child, too, and kept his hair like a girl's in the style of the past. The two worlds weren't essentially far apart, he thought: they both kept the flame of the heart alive. It was that third world that had broken in on Granville despite his parents, and the marvel~~

of Maimbury's presence---for which Granville had no <sup>a</sup>parallel or previous warning in his life---was that it showed no trace at all of <sup>the</sup> that 'higher world'. That was the revelation of Maimbury's lunch invitation for Granville! And he realised that Deryk did, emphatically,

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belong to <sup>the</sup> ~~that~~ 'higher world': like Beatrice, he had <sup>not a</sup> ~~turned~~ gentle ~~ness~~ of heart, <sup>but</sup> ~~into a matter of~~ gentle manners.

<sup>And</sup> ~~But~~ this light in Maimbury was something that could never have been invented <sup>or</sup> ~~and~~ cultivated by one man alone; ~~while intimate and inimitable, it still pointed to other people, and joined with them, it wasn't solitary~~ It could only have been inherited, and grown out of birth, through slow years of growing, in safety. <sup>Were</sup> ~~Are~~ we going to lose <sup>all</sup> that? ~~Warville wondered.~~ Were we going to become simply separate citizens, each with his personality, but with nothing marvellous inherited? What Maimbury carried in his body and in his fine, restful eyes was a theme that had grown like a slow flower by the ingenuity of generations, and <sup>was</sup> a doctrine that couldn't be passed on articulately: it was a light known only by presence, and impossible even to give a name to because no single thing composed it, only the total life of one person! That was aristocracy: it wasn't class---namely, ~~power~~ <sup>group</sup>, but a genius which no country, once given it, <sup>could</sup> ever forget, ~~and which, perhaps, was the soul of a country,~~ <sup>and</sup> beyond <sup>which, in</sup> ~~whose~~ simplicity and sweetness, <sup>it could never go.</sup> ~~no one could go.~~ ~~This had existed in the great~~ ~~Clave Grysham, nearly two hundred years before. he would sit in front of a painting surrounded by his dogs and children, and give it the best heart possible, according to the painters of the time; he had no ambitions, since he possessed everything a man could want, and therefore was in a way devoid of self. So with Maimbury: he gave the impression of a golden and enchanting self, while yet he seemed to be only for other people, asking one question after another, never talking about his own life, always looking to the other person's needs.~~

→ Aristocracy was only an image, caught for a moment; it wasn't truly a historical reality. The image was only passed on in glimpses. ~~Where it had become historical reality it was visible still in our~~

lives, a gentle reminder in the great country houses and parks, in the libraries and galleries, in a clear, vivid way of speech that was the seed of poetry. Aristocracy was the attempt to create civilised beings, not ideas and public projects. It was the achievement, nearly, of a godly image. No principles safeguarded or hindered it. A man was <sup>it</sup> simply by his presence <sup>alone,</sup> beyond dispute. <sup>it</sup> He carried in him the light that couldn't be purchased or learned or damaged; it could only be inherited.

Granville told himself that we had to keep this living image of what our civilisation was: Were we to have only bare records <sup>of it,</sup> without the living voice? Was it only to be memoirs and, picturesque glimpses of the past in country palaces open to the public? And how haunted this public was with the past! In every country they were trudging over these mellow, wooden staircases, along the whispering galleries, past the embattlements, gazing up in awe, trying to dream the past, <sup>enjoying the dream by themselves</sup> before people had lost their touch for each other, before they had elected a ghostly public world above them which was supposed to take precedence over their own intimate gestures! Only men like Maimbury actually bore it in their faces, sunk into the flesh. They were really its living image. Not an image by virtue of the thoughts they had or the work they did or the power they exercised; that was all public world; no, it was in his hands, in his voice that came like a cool, clear stream, that gurgled however much noise there was outside, and would, perhaps, be the last thing to be heard, in the nature of streams.

Were we to do away with that marvellous evidence of the past, with the first image, <sup>so to speak,</sup> of our own souls? Could we inherit as well? The middle-class had done its job now, after all. It had broken down all inheritance; there wasn't a whiff of divine privilege in the world outside the Vatican. Hadn't they reached the

*Had the 'higher world' reached the*

*stale*  
 end of ~~the~~<sup>its</sup> historical task? Now a man had to create his own life! Would he do it in that most perfect of all images? It was all laid before us in the tales of kings, in the country houses that had never stirred from their first tranquillity: what an extraordinary inheritance awaited us if we could break our silence of the heart! But if we kept to the middle-class road, ashamed to be ourselves, because self was dark and secret, if we kept on joining movements and trying to make more movements, if we looked for the right society all the time, and the right principles, and the right safeguards for our children, if we let our selves of here and now die, broken by the noise outside that prompted us to join and spoke to us out of radios and stared at us in the morning from the newspaper and gazed at us from films, always drawing us to believe in a bigger and finer world outside which was ~~in fact~~ only composed of people like us ~~whose selves had withered~~<sup>ourselves,</sup> into, almost, hollowness, if we never turned to our own silence, never let that silence take its own time, ~~with us,~~ never learned to take action from its sound root; if we never braved the accusation that we were useless or lazy or selfish, or out of the group, or hollow, or dead by virtue of our solitude: then we should inherit death, and our children would look into our public faces and read nothing! ~~in them~~  
 A great religious duty for the first time awaited, not simply a few ~~conscious~~ people but untold numbers.

*J*  
~~During that first lunch with Maimbury, before the coffee came,~~  
 he had excused himself and gone to the lavatory; this <sup>had</sup> meant walking across the dining room and then the long foyer outside, so that he was away for some minutes. He combed his hair and washed his hands without hurrying, and wandered back to the table. The moment he sat down he was aware that the atmosphere had changed. He noticed it at once

To P 672 (New Chapter)

New Chapter. (20)

87cl

CHAPTER 20

~~CHAPTER 20~~



→ n.p.

When ~~Pinkie~~ came back <sup>Pinkie</sup> that evening he told ~~her~~ <sup>her</sup> about ~~his~~ <sup>the</sup> meeting with Deryk and she chuckled. She said she wondered what Deryk was doing in ~~the~~ Kensington Gardens, he had a date with Peter Pan, perhaps! She would ~~phone~~ <sup>phone</sup> Beatrice one day from the office and they'd get a lunch out of ~~her~~ <sup>the</sup> old girl!

Dick <sup>dashed</sup> ~~swept~~ into the bedroom <sup>house and took him aside,</sup> when he was sitting at his desk later ~~in the evening and said~~ <sup>EVERY</sup> his beard wagging excitedly "Jesus, I could kick myself---I've just let the most dazzling girl slip through my fingers! She sat next to me on the bus and we got off at the same stop! She started looking in the chemist's window and I know she wanted me to speak to her! But I funk'd it! You know, that sort of thing spoils the whole evening for me. What a fool I am!"

"Why don't you go back and look for her?" ~~he asked~~ <sup>he asked</sup>

"No, ~~she~~ <sup>now!</sup> the spontaneity's gone ~~in a way~~ <sup>now!</sup>

<sup>He</sup> Dick slouched about the house and later on, upstairs in the kitchen when Pinkie had left the room for a moment, he whispered in <sup>Granville's</sup> ~~his~~ ear, "I keep going over it in my mind! I've had dozens of imaginary conversations with her. I'll never let that happen again!"

Hanni joined them and they all went downstairs to the music-room. Pinkie put on a Bach record from years ago, scratched and faint, the

suite in D major; they sat listening to <sup>it</sup> ~~it~~ in silence; the atmosphere was sad; they all lolled in their chairs; it seemed to him that Pinkie was on the point of tears!

n.p.

[Some talk began afterwards about Bach in which Hanni said in a quiet voice, "I think he's so wonderfully mathematical!" <sup>This angered Granville.</sup> ~~This was in her tone of official criticism.~~ <sup>He,</sup> Granville

asked her, ~~in an equally quiet voice,~~ trying to stop all sorts of indignant feelings rushing out, if she really meant that?

n.p.

[And here Dick spoke up; he said there was a 'case' for the idea; Bach did have a 'mathematical kind of symmetry';

n.p.

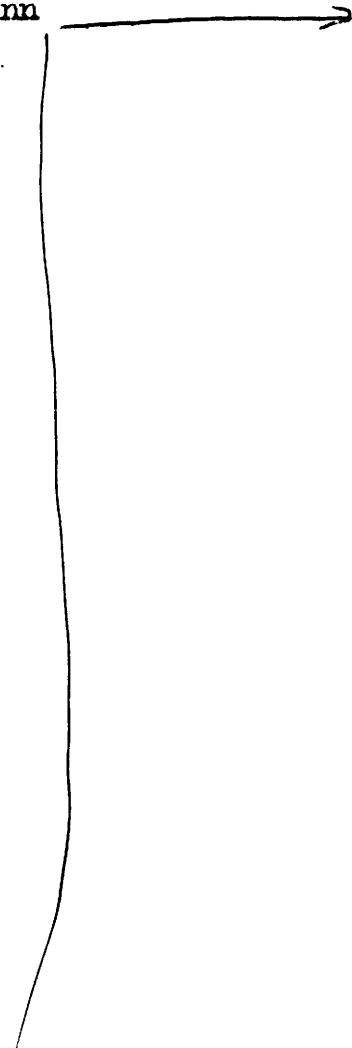
To which Granville murmured, flushing, "Symmetry, my arse!" Hanni's mettle was up: "What has he got, then," she asked.

n.p.

"Feeling, I suppose?" [Her face was fixed with fear and defiance at the same time, so that her lips were pursed, trembling <sup>ed</sup> slightly, ~~and~~ <sup>and pursed</sup> pale,

[Dick stroked his beard and ~~said~~ <sup>said</sup> he found 'old Johann

n.p.



Sebastian really stunning stuff!"

Hanni persisted with her question to Granville, asking him what there was in Bach if not symmetry, and he said with a rather foolish expression, "God!" And he added quickly, "Christ as well---Bach understood everything about Christ!"

He ~~leaned~~ forward and was just about to go on talking when Hanni got up and strode out of the room. She left the house and Dick followed to look after her. And she didn't appear again for three days. Granville was left bubbling over to himself. But the next day Pinkie said <sup>that</sup> Hanni had been most annoyed <sup>about</sup> ~~with~~ Dick---he would go on ~~with~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~talk~~ talking about the girl he'd nearly ~~talked~~ spoken to outside the chemist's and saying he wanted to kick himself, and asking Hanni if she thought he'd missed anything really 'hot'. The ~~the~~ Bach had just come on top of that!

There was an incident rather like this one a few days later---it left Granville in the same state. It involved Pinkie and Dick this time. Pinkie was studying ~~x~~ 'The Racing Times', which she sometimes bought if she wanted to lay a bet; and she had ingenious ideas, which she never applied, for getting the ~~winner~~ winners by multiple betting, which meant laying out a lot of money; in Basrah they'd followed one of these multiple systems on paper, with the race-results from England, but were always baffled by the long losing-runs. She was lying on the divan reading the dog-race results, and making notes with a blue pencil. Dick was talking about the office, and asking him ~~by~~ casually, with his light, deliberately objective voice, why he preferred working in Basrah, since the work <sup>here</sup> was the same as in London, the office-furniture was the same, only it was stifling hot. This came near to one

ingenious ideas, which she never applied, for getting the winners by multiple betting, which meant laying out a lot of money; in Basrah they'd followed one of these multiple systems on paper, with the race-results from England, ~~and they~~ <sup>but</sup> were always baffled by the long losing-runs. She was lying on the divan reading the dog-racing results, and making notes with a blue pencil. Dick was talking about the office, and asked <sup>him</sup> him casually, with his light, deliberately <sup>objective</sup> ~~impersonal~~ voice, what he found were the chief differences between the office in Basrah and ~~the one he'd had~~ <sup>the one he'd had</sup> in London. This came near to one of Granville's 'themes', and he leaned forward to speak about it; he said that the first thing was the presence of Mohammed facing him at the opposite wall; you didn't get that in London---and here Dick nodded and smiled agreeably; and there was the heat; there <sup>was</sup> the sunlight that blazed through the blinds in little strips; one could hear the call-to-prayer; as he spoke he was leading up to something, the presence in Basrah of the religious world, in all ~~the~~ things, big and small. <sup>But</sup> Suddenly, as he was speaking, Pinkie looked up and said quietly to Dick, "I've just discovered ~~about~~ <sup>the truth of what she said;</sup> the world's finest system." Her voice was so quiet that it was impossible to doubt ~~her~~; Dick's eyes were alight at once and he asked ~~her~~ her to 'spill the beans', and when she said in the same quiet voice, full of her discovery, "You want to know about a really watertight system, do you?", Dick cried, "Yes, please, teacher!", and jumped up from his chair; he went across to her without another glance at Granville and together they began going through the notes <sup>she'd</sup> ~~she~~ made in her little book, with the latest results before them. Granville sat on, ~~stunned~~ <sup>stunned</sup>, his unspoken words whirling round in his head; ~~he felt completely~~ <sup>useless</sup> but on behalf of his <sup>own</sup> ~~dignity~~ <sup>he</sup> didn't get up and leave. He heard Pinkie's voice, still soft with assurance; "Say you've got <sup>a dog</sup> ~~one~~ running at 6-4/and another one at 4-6 against, and you're betting even money both ways, well, what you do---of course, that's if you've got more or less outsider-odds on at least three, otherwise you don't touch the race," while Dick gazed over her shoulder, rapt, no longer judicious, and involved as Granville had never seen him in any

discussion they'd ever had! To his surprise, half-way through Pinkie's explanation Dick looked up and murmured, "Sorry I interrupted you, old sport, but I won't get an offer like this again." Pinkie chuckled and they went on.

"You know, Pip, I think I'm better trained for this world than you are," Dick said to him one evening in the pub. And Granville nodded his agreement.

Dick paused, looking down at his finger-tips.

"I'll tell you something, Pip," he went on. "There's one thing I've never been able to shake off, and that's---" He glanced at Granville with a smile, blinking quickly--- "a sense that I belong to the best people."

"Oh!"

"Now that comes from Lady Godiva. She's always told me, so has the old man, 'Remember, you've had the best this country can offer, you've been to the best schools, you've got advantages everybody else is after---and they're going to envy you!' Now, it's odd, but I can't shake that off. I can't agree that I have got advantages, but I feel I have, I just can't help it---!" He looked into Granville's eyes calmly, with the slight smile he always had when he was trying to think something out. "I feel people look up to me, but more than that---they want something out of me! They're trying to get some sort of advantage out of me! It isn't a matter of attitude at all---it's just a state I'm always in---I feel that when people approach me they recognise something!"

"Perhaps they do!"

"But I feel it towards you as well."

Dick turned his pale eyes towards him, and Granville felt chilled for a moment. But he was used to Dick's occasional frightening candour, and smiled. "How do you mean?"

"Well, I feel you and Pidge like having me round the house--- for my company---also to help the tone."

"Tone?"

"I tell you, it isn't an attitude, it's just what I feel instinctively. Say you stop and talk to me on the stairs, I feel you're after something! I can't help it! You want me to make you feel less

lonely, or you're after some information about the office, or you'd like a drink, it's always something that I can give you! And I can give it to you or hold it back, as I like."

Granville smiled at him. "It's honest of you. ~~x~~"

"Well, you know me, old man, poor but honest!" Dick said with a little laugh, falling into his facetious manner.

There was a pause.

"Is that how Lady Godiva feels?" Granville asked him.

"Yes! But she feels it about working people. They're all caricatures for her. Of course, I've passed beyond that. I'm not a bloody fool!"

"Suppose your parents met mine, do you mean they wouldn't talk to them as if they were real people?"

"Well," Dick gazed before him, considering it. "I don't know your parents, except what Hanni's told me---she liked them a hell of a lot, but, yes, well, they'd see them as sort of working class characters, like on the stage, not people they could relax with or really talk to! They'd see them as rather pathetic---not responsible for their own actions---not quite in life! They'd humour them all the time! Oh, they'd be kindly and enquiring, but as they would be to---well, invalids. They wouldn't think your parents' feelings worth talking about like their own!"

"What would my parents have to do to qualify as serious, then?"

"Well, they'd have to have money for a start, live somewhere else, change their accents. They'd have to be 'educated'---but not what you mean by educated. They don't mean being able to read and think and that sort of thing, because all their reading and thinking is fake anyway, and they get it all from the newspapers like everybody else---they mean by 'educated' living like them!"

"Being middle-class!"

"If you like. You see, they could never imagine that your parents had as much refinement or sensibility as they do. This is where I've advanced beyond them---I can imagine it! They'd never be able to imagine themselves living in a working street and going off to work early in the morning, and that sort of thing. It's just a closed world to them! They couldn't credit someone who says ~~4~~ 'iggins instead of Higgins with their capacities of feeling!"

Ken!"

What they feel towards working people you feel to everybody," Granville said with a smile.

*-Kals*  
"Yes, but they also feel it to everybody. Nobody's up to their mark!" Then he added seriously. "I respect you more than most people. I'm rather scared of what you think. But at the moment of being with you, in a position of contact, I feel superior!"

"But why?"

*-Kals*  
"Because---well, you're just you, if you see what I mean! There's just you sitting in front of me every time, and that little voice inside me says you ought to be more! I don't believe you ought to be more---but the little voice says you should come to people with more style, if you see what I mean, not just yourself, you should coat it all round a bit like Glenning, or keep a more organised appointments book, or something like that---it's difficult to put it into words! But I like you---I don't agree with the little voice, but there it is! And when all's said and done, we're similar to each other in one respect---we're---lone birds!"

"But that little voice doesn't say the same about everybody, does it?" Granville asked him.

"Oh, no!"

"What does it say about Pinkie?"

"It says she's got an obsession about being left out of the party. So she needs my company! Which gives me a little itch to withdraw it."

"Oh!"

"I'll tell you something else, Abdul," Dick said as he got up to get more drinks. "You're the only man I'd allow to call me Dick. Otherwise it's Richard. Did you know that?"

"It's very flattering!" He realised for the first time that, indeed, the only people who called him Dick apart from himself were Hamni and Pinkie.

And when that conversation was over, as they drank coffee upstairs in the kitchen, as the last light was going down, Dick said to him, "Well, old sport, have you made up your mind about Makboula?"

"Makboula?"

"The hair-girl---!"

→ "Yes, I know, but what---?"

~~Chapter 11.~~

~~A few days later Dick said to Jim, "Well, old sport, have you made up your mind about Makoola?"~~

~~He looked at him in silence. "What do you mean?"~~

"Well," Dick replied, "do you like her?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Well, then, you'd better get in while the going's good! You'll catch her on the hop. I believe she's just finished something with an Australian crooner or an Aztec weight-lifter---I forget which!"

Granville laughed and said, in that case he certainly would do something! He noticed Dick was easier with him than before. It was a barely perceptible change in his manner. ~~He seemed to feel relief, perhaps at Granville having glimpsed Harrow and Granville on his side, found it easier to accept him. They had a clearer picture of the differences between them and a certain conspiratorial grudge against the world for having made it so.~~

He tried to remember the hair-girl's face, but couldn't. His recent life had become abstract and floating, <sup>kind of</sup> ~~in a~~ dazed flow; he could remember Deryk Grysham vividly, and also how pinkie had left the house before breakfast <sup>that</sup> ~~on the~~ saturday morning a week, two weeks ago; these incidents were like pictures in his mind, singularly ~~detached from the~~

detached from him; ~~while his nerves throbbled on in a painfully excited way,~~ he couldn't focus his attention properly.

Pinkie rang up Beatrice and they went over to lunch. There was the same gushing politeness as ever. Pinkie looked tall, dazzling and rather patrician, <sup>little</sup> as she had done for <sup>her</sup> the first lunch with Maimbury ~~years before.~~ This time she wore a pair of delightful turquoise earrings, which apparently she had bought at the same <sup>time</sup> as the cuff-links he'd smashed ~~on Basrah.~~ She was quiet, however, over lunch, and answered Beatrice's continual questions perfunctorily. She was detached from them all, and for a moment it seemed to him that he was nearer the family than she was. Basrah she hardly mentioned. It was like dead history now. Between her and Deryk there was a family-playfulness; but it was automatic and didn't touch her inner mood. The flat had a sombre, damp light, without its former fabulous suggestions for him. Beatrice looked only a trace older, her eyes strained, while Deryk seemed to brood under an immense, overbearing fatigue that pushed him further and further down in his chair. Their inner moods, too, were hidden. What were they feeling underneath? Why did one require to know what they were feeling underneath? ~~Because communication was a public form in this world, not a stream from the inner life. Great attention was paid to him when he talked about Basrah.~~

*ital.*  
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Pinkie said afterwards that his job had 'Imperial style' for Beatrice and that he was now 'fully rehabilitated', meaning that he'd got over his 'background' <sup>all right.</sup> ~~magnificently. The Commander hadn't appeared, and she said that if he'd farted from upstairs it would have been a sign that Granville had really arrived.~~

She got a day off and they walked together near the river, then went for a bathe in the Lido. A letter came from her friend Elizabeth

Bewley-Patton inviting them both to her house at a ~~place called~~ <sup>place called</sup> Meedham, near York, in a week's time: Pinkie was to ~~phone~~ <sup>phone</sup> and arrange it.

He'd never been there but she said the countryside was lovely and that ~~there was~~ <sup>he was</sup> sea near by; the house was an old vicarage and had a marvellous panelled bathroom with huge Victorian taps, <sup>she said,</sup> all smelling of Bewley-Patton's 'musk-perfume and pine-salts'; she'd met him several times and said he was rather like Nigel, only <sup>an</sup> even more 'classical' sort of person; he didn't ride to hounds and he 'liked the girls'.

3 Pinkie was sun-burned again, from the Lido. They went through a few days like their very first together, in Reading; they walked arm-in-arm, and she almost kissed him in the old style, with her tongue. They ragged and played the fool as they'd <sup>once</sup> ~~always~~ done before Basrah. She called him 'Pip-squeak' for the first time in a year. He wondered at this, and his numbed state of mind accepted good as well as bad.

Glennings came in one evening and let it fall that he'd just lost  
'a good

man' at the office; this turned out to be Grove, of all people! Apparently, they'd done some work together, and Grove came to the office in a free-lance capacity. Pinkie wasn't there when Glenning talked about it; he didn't glance at Granville once but seemed to talk to himself, mumbling and looking down; then he took ~~him~~ <sup>Granville</sup> out for a drink and bought a bottle of wine; Granville wondered if he was trying to do him a service <sup>of some kind!</sup> Glenning told him he said he'd met Grove at the house, before Granville came back, and found out that he was a first-class photographer and 'contact-man'; "He's done bloody good work for me, I'll say that," he murmured; but now Grove had decided to set up on his own, a sort of publicity firm under the name 'Grove Publicity Management Ltd.' He didn't know where his money came from, because he hadn't <sup>had</sup> a bean before. He knew he'd got a loan from somewhere. There had been a rumour that someone quite influential had extended a helping hand; could the name be Maimbury? Granville's cheeks flushed and he said quickly, "Yes, that's an uncle of Pinkie's." And Glenning simply nodded in a lazy fashion, still gazing down; he had <sup>such</sup> a protective manner, ~~with Granville~~ <sup>And</sup> after he'd said this he leaned forward and poured him another glass of wine; "Let's get drunk tonight, shall we, old boy?" he said, and Granville nodded. They left the house, which was empty, it being Friday evening, and went to the Marquis, which Granville was proud to show him. Glenning bought a bottle of whisky there, and they drank it slowly; neither of them were members but Granville saw Joyce, the pale girl, and managed to get himself joined <sup>to the club</sup> by paying a pound; ~~no one else he knew was there; with the pale girl~~ <sup>with her</sup> he was shy and detached and was terrified she'd come downstairs and join them when she'd finished at the bar; but there was no sign of her. Glenning said that funnily enough he knew <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ place through Grove, who did the publicity for the 'Kaaba dancing company' who rehearsed here. Grove was achieving quite a ubiquity. Granville thought During the whisky he remembered that Pinkie's bank balance had been surprisingly low when he'd ask her for a loan; this explained it; she and Maimbury had gone in together! He began to feel a smarting indignation against them; but he remembered the last few sun-lit days

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with Pinkie and refused to believe it. Finally, when he went home, he was sure that Glenning would <sup>had been</sup> have told him what he did if there was no connection between Grove and Pinkie.

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He began going to the office, <sup>for the work in his files</sup> and on the <sup>second</sup> day he asked Dick to spend the night at the house so that they could travel in together one morning; it would be like the old Reading days, when they'd got up early to go for <sup>a week-end's camping or</sup> a day's hike across Berkshire, ~~or gone off for a week-end's camping.~~ They breakfasted alone in the kitchen, before Pinkie was up; it was darkening in the mornings now and they had the light on; Dick made the tea while he managed the bacon and eggs. They joked and chafed each other. The house was wonderfully silent, and they spoke in undertones, sipping their tea. There was the old fascination he got from Dick's company, of seeing everything fresh and vivid, as if life was being laid in front of <sup>him</sup> them for the first time; there was none of the ache of being with a woman; <sup>harder</sup> a wonderful relish ~~was to be found~~ in everything; all the little sights and sounds of the kitchen could be noticed; the light glowed more mysteriously; they ate their fill and then threw everything into the sink. ~~One couldn't quite stretch out one's spirit with a woman~~

~~at~~ The whine of the first buses in the distance was thrilling to him; he advanced one of his favourite ideas to Dick, that men and women should have their separate worlds, as the two 'rhythms' were so different; and Dick said, while he nosed over the morning paper, that this would be all right as long as he had access <sup>to the other world;</sup> ~~and theirs,~~ and headed that he'd managed to establish a comfortable rhythm <sup>with women</sup> at times, differences notwithstanding. They chuckled and went off to work. ~~His usual life seemed so lonely compared with this.~~

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They took a bus down; the lights were still, looking sickly in the growing sunlight. "Well, bo'sun," Dick said, giving him a nudge, "now you know what I go through while you're basking in the desert sun." The tiny office was exactly as he'd left it <sup>the day before,</sup> with the files ready, piled on the floor; and the Secret Weapon <sup>a</sup> was waiting for him with notebook in her hand. A few of the people downstairs recognised <sup>him</sup> and greeted him cheerfully; they all

had the same mild, respectful and enquiring air; what a difference it was from the black stares of Basrah! <sup>One</sup> A group of them asked <sup>him</sup> what life was like 'out there' and he stood between their desks trying to answer ~~them~~ while they gazed at him with a certain light in their eyes; they seemed to be seeing the dazzling desert as he described it, gazing into the distance. When the door of his office was closed and the first file <sup>was</sup> lying on his desk he began to feel <sup>a peculiar</sup> an extraordinary relief; the chair was soft, on a swivel and made with leather. He sat deeper in it and gazed out of the window; he could just see the edge of St. Paul's, dusty like a piece of fabric in the sunlight. His thoughts began to collect themselves into the office-plan he hadn't known for more than two months. h.p. [He worked there for three days and realised <sup>that</sup> the work would take him another week. Pinkie had talked to Elizabeth Bewley-Patton and had arranged for them <sup>to</sup> spend about five days there. <sup>because of his extra work.</sup> But now that was altered; she would go up in a few days <sup>alone,</sup> and after a week, when he'd finished at the office, he'd join her. ~~she'd already got leave at the office, through Nigel.~~ She said she was so relieved to be getting out of London; and it wasn't going to be a 'dressy' sort of visit; there'd only be 'old Liz'; her husband was in Malta or somewhere for the Admiralty; when she <sup>old him,</sup> phoned Elizabeth up, she ~~said~~ the housekeeper had thought she was Laura Lady Maine! But the house wasn't 'grand', she added; there wouldn't even be the housekeeper there <sup>during their</sup> when they <sup>stay;</sup> ~~went~~ it was going to be <sup>c</sup> cosy and restful.

In the evening he always left the office <sup>before</sup> with ~~out~~ Dick, who would be delayed at his desk or have to take a client out to dinner. This was the price <sup>one</sup> he had to pay, he said, for early promotion. <sup>Dick</sup> ~~Dick~~ had lost some of his ease of manner in recent weeks; his <sup>face</sup> ~~office~~ took on a <sup>look</sup> ~~more~~ careful when he reached the pillared entrance <sup>of T.I.M.</sup> ~~downstairs~~, where the commissionaire stood, and he appeared to steel himself. h.p. Granville's life was regular again; he slept the moment his head touched the pillow; wild thoughts were kept at bay; the idea of Pinkie having a lover <sup>was</sup> ~~seemed~~ now manifestly absurd to him; it was 'dramatic'; his mind was clear and practical! Other people's faces at the office had a

fixed quietude; and he could see why; his own had become the same! His secretary always closed the door with hushed, careful fingers; her face was wholly set on the work, as if its themes went into the pores of her skin and stretched down her long legs and into the thin heels and toes of her shoes; all her movements were under strict and minute surveillance, from her tactfully painted lips to her stockings; she <sup>really did have</sup> had the intricacy and exactitude of a weapon. <sup>It seemed that</sup> ~~it seemed to him sometimes~~ <sup>wasn't</sup> ~~The effect would have been the same if~~ <sup>in her naked state</sup> she'd been given a list of points on which a woman is judged by a man, and conformed to them methodically, <sup>in her dress and manners,</sup> without herself being involved in any way.

He began to feel shame towards his life at Chaworth road. What a chaos and wreck it <sup>was!</sup> had been! <sup>subversive</sup> ~~This order had been quite lacking;~~ How could he bear to look into his secretary's eyes and say good morning to the people downstairs as he passed their desks, when he had this behind him? ~~All the time~~ He had the throbbing conviction that his life was remiss, far underground; he wished to keep to the order of the office from now on! It outlawed everything that belonged to him alone---in the dead of night---to do with him and Pinkie; it established a fixed exterior; and there was pleasure in this; <sup>you</sup> one could become as symmetrical as the office itself, taking tea at eleven, going down to lunch with the morning paper under <sup>your</sup> ~~an~~ arm, sitting in the same chair by the window, with <sup>a</sup> the same glass of lager which the waitress put before <sup>you in</sup> ~~him~~ the <sup>same way every day, and</sup> ~~moment he sat down,~~ picking up the telephone, talking in a formalised manner, smiling the same smile at the secretary every <sup>time the dictation was over!</sup> ~~day.~~ Chaworth Road was sometimes a shock in the evening; he couldn't make the adjustment at once; ~~no one~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~would be waiting,~~ and, especially when a small party collected, one ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> to look free; a drink helped! He remembered Mohammed's face from a great distance; it was a face wreathed with all sorts of little corruptions and kindnesses, with <sup>all</sup> the brothels he'd been to, with <sup>all</sup> the araks <sup>in the</sup> he'd drunk <sup>every</sup> evening, with the girls off the street, and the boys ~~whom~~ he took ~~to be with him~~ in his squalid room, gazing at them with his soft, black, incurious eyes! Mohammed

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sat in a specially cushioned chair; and he would sigh sometimes, murmuring, "Allah, wa-Allah!", and take a cigarette, or send out for tea; sometimes he would lift his eyes and begin talking to him quietly about the latest bit of scandal; um Hussein, the wife of the chemist Abdullah, <sup>had been</sup> was seen in the green district the other night, in a closed car, number-plate diplomatic; <sup>his eyes</sup> smoky black eyes would gaze into the distance; the chauffeur of the Minister of Economics had screamed an insult at <sup>his master,</sup> ~~him~~; <sup>calling him 'a father of tricks' and</sup> in his own house, saying that 'his arse streamed with come', which was <sup>worst</sup> ~~the most frightful~~ insult for a man, since it implied the 'passive role'; and that the Minister would surely 'put him away'. Granville began to think he'd never see the face again; and that it hadn't definitely happened.

Under his influence Pinkie also fell back into a routine life; the rituals of Basrah were established again; she got up half-an-hour earlier and made the tea; and she shopped on her way home, and began to have something ready for him in the evening. She even did extra cooking, and made delicious meat-loaves and desserts; the bathroom was clean, and there were fresh sheets on the bed. She hardly went out in the evening. He looked at her in wonder; the affectionateness of the last few days continued. She was flushed healthily, and <sup>wore</sup> ~~put on~~ a pretty house-coat. From the moment he put on office clothes again a certain established submission <sup>had come</sup> ~~came~~ over her; as Dick said to him one day, "There's nothing like a nine-to-five routine for bringing a woman to heel"; every woman, <sup>a</sup> he said, was <sup>a suburban.</sup> conventional in that respect. <sup>lump</sup> The house sparkled, and they got wonderful food. The buses were always full when he came home, and very quiet, with the tiredness of everyone. Most people had newspapers, and opened them with a crackle; the air was full of mechanical, clicking movements. Newspapers were opened, folded once, folded again, then held before the eyes; it went on mechanically; the desire to read didn't seem essential to it. As the conductor moved down the gangway there would be clipped voices, "Aldgate, please," "Three-penny one, please", "Six and a half, please", while the bus hummed and trembled in its depths.

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Everything went click-click and there were few easy movements of the eyes, lips or hands; <sup>only</sup> ~~but~~ underneath <sup>the</sup> ~~there~~ was <sup>hidden, broken, ~~pathetic~~</sup> a ~~little~~ warmth and calm, joining everyone. After a few days the rhythm got into him, too; there was a place for the newspaper in the right hand; it was folded in a certain way; the face was set in a matter-of-fact expression; walking was business-like and unpretentious; <sup>your</sup> ~~one's~~ movements suggested that life was ordinary, known and previously examined, so that surprise, curiosity or the close inspection of ~~anything~~ <sup>anything</sup> were out of place. He remembered the hair-girl's dance, and caught his breath to realise that it had actually happened; and he couldn't believe that he'd sat downstairs in the Marquis with Dick and the muscular-looking girl, and kept his composure; life appeared to him as a pattern of flat, simple, ordinary facts; these facts were that he had a house, lived there with his wife, had a job, was free in the evenings, and so forth!

*ital* Outside that commonsense-structure things were dreamy and unreal. 'Everything has been taken care of,' the city seemed to say, ~~speaking through its buses and trains,~~ 'and you needn't stir yourself.'

He was astonished at the serious way <sup>with</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>now</sup> people treated him---the commissionaire outside the T.I.M. entrance when he arrived in the morning, and bus-conductors, shop-keepers, waitresses; he wore a dark suit and a semi-starched collar, and the office-work made it possible for him to do everything at the acknowledged times; he was never anywhere out of hours; and there was an understood public tribute for that. What he really <sup>y</sup> felt, or what he was, had become vague.

*But* He was brought up with a jolt; it happened on ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> Friday. Pinkie <sup>out</sup> phoned him at the office to say she'd be going/withe Hanni, and would he mind getting his own dinner tonight? Dick might be coming round to share his grub. However, Dick didn't join him on his way out of the office; some last-minute work had come in. Nobody was in the house when he got back, though these days the downstairs door was ~~usually~~ left open for people like Gerald ~~or~~ <sup>or</sup> Glenning to wander in if they felt like it. He cooked some food and ate

the dessert she'd left him; it became dark and he decided he'd like to go for a walk; he went as far as Piccadilly, where it was dusty and hot, and took a bus back, getting home after eleven. She was still not home, so he decided to go out again ~~for~~ for a shorter stroll, down to <sup>the</sup> Commercial road and back; he was walking ~~past a bus stop~~ quite near the house when he happened to turn round and watch a bus that was just slowing down; there weren't many people on board, and the yellow lights inside had a blazing effect on the darkness; it made him blink. He glanced at the upper deck and to his astonishment saw Pinkie with someone at her side; he looked closer and noticed that a hand was resting on her shoulder; it was Grove's; then Grove leaned towards her, whispering something, and kissed her on the cheek; she gazed before her in a sad way, like a child being taken home after a treat, droopy and tired. Granville's heart was beating so fast that he could hardly take breath. He didn't know which way to turn in case they should get off the bus now; but ~~it went on without them getting off and now~~ <sup>they didn't, and as the bus drew away from him</sup> he had a better view from behind--- the pale hand resting heavily on her shoulder, Grove's thick, black hair down to his collar, and the same neck he'd noticed the first evening, with fluffier hair at the base; he turned down a side-street to avoid home; Grove might take her to the gate and he might surprise them; he wanted to wait; he stumbled along, not seeing anything round him; his composure was ~~all~~ gone; the palms of his hands were sweating and blood rushed into his head and pounded about.

He wanted to give them time to say good night. The absurdest doubt started in him <sup>as to whether</sup> ~~that~~ he'd actually seen them; now he knew how he distorted things to his own advantage! He rushed towards Chaworth Road suddenly, wanting further proof that they were together, or rather that they were lovers suppose she said to him calmly, "Well, what's in a kiss? Don't friends kiss each other sometimes?" But now it was too late. He'd given them time to get away! There was a pleasure in the hunt; the shadow of a grim sexual pleasure; it would excite him to see them together, see them kiss! He

leapt along the pavement, his <sup>dark</sup> office-coat flying. When he got to the house there was no one outside; a light went on in the music-room upstairs; the sight was ~~extraordinarily~~ <sup>staggeringly</sup> forlorn to him! [He started in on the subject as soon as he was standing in front of her; she was sitting on the bed taking off her stockings, and she had ~~started~~ <sup>begun</sup> to undo her blouse so that her breasts were visible, preparing to go to bed. "What the bloody hell have you been up to?" he shouted. [She made a jump and looked up at him, pale at once, her mouth open, like a child; he fought against his compassion. "What do you mean?" she asked breathlessly, terrified. [He could tell that her heart was beating fast now as well; he noticed for the first time that she had a touch of grey at the side of her hair. "You're having an affair!" he shouted. [And she said to this, her voice trembling, "What on earth are you talking about?" "I told you to be honest---! The first night---!" he shouted at her. [His anger mounted and she started crying. He kept repeating, "Have you got a lover?" And to his surprise she suddenly looked up with the most simple expression and said in ~~the same~~ <sup>a</sup> quiet voice, "Yes." [But either because she saw the crushed and stunned look on his face, and the total collapsing movement he made <sup>with</sup> ~~in~~ his body, or because it was true, she added at once, "No, I haven't." The room looked in ruins. The carpet, bed and chairs had a disconnected look; he was dazed and sometimes it seemed his eyes had gone wrong, because her image kept flickering. ~~She then said that she and Grove were friends, if that's what he was referring to.~~ He realised he hadn't mentioned what he'd seen; and he couldn't bring himself to mention it! She might <sup>then tell</sup> ~~treat it as conclusive evidence, and~~ <sup>and</sup> tell him everything; he couldn't bear that! He kept drilling into her, exhausting her, until it was past two in the morning, storming about her lack of constancy, asking if she wanted a divorce, repeating his question again and again---did she have a lover? She wept nearly all the time; he said she'd better get over her tears and start facing the question; to his question did she want a divorce, put for the fourth or fifth time, she made the same simple reply she'd made before,

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with the same expression, "Yes." When they were in bed she broke down again and fell into his arms; she said through her tears that she wanted them to be 'lovers' again, like at first; it was a strange thing to say; he didn't know what <sup>it meant;</sup> ~~he should do~~ <sup>what</sup> now could he <sup>do</sup> <sup>to make them</sup> ~~change matters so that they would be~~ 'lovers' again? He thought about this even while she ~~gri~~ clung to him and he held her round the shoulders. He was comforted. The word came to his mind again and again, 'lovers': what did she mean? They switched the light out and she began to sleep; he lay puzzling; she wanted to go back to those first summer days in Reading; it was impossible; he was finished; and there he slept. #

His life here was a masquerade; it struck him next morning; he was sick and beaten; he couldn't bear to look her in the face; he had nothing to say; and she seemed to have no sorrow; they <sup>spent</sup> two hours over breakfast, it being Saturday, and then made coffee; she was mute, with tight-closed lips. He wanted to attack her again and go through the same questionnaire as the night before; but what was the use? Questions presupposed a hope; and there wasn't

<sup>Hope!</sup> He'd tried to find out the truth ~~about them~~ before, but not too hard; now he knew. He was alone, and he had to make a life for himself; it was a flat, pale, <sup>a ca</sup> implacable conviction. There were no other thoughts in his head. Everything was quiet and still in him. But it didn't afford him any relief; it was only a weak state, like the pause after an operation. He tried not to believe what he'd seen with his eyes. A little idiot-voice in his head said that the kiss had been an <sup>us</sup> illusion. He steeled himself to ask Hanni, had she <sup>really</sup> been with Pinkie <sup>the previous</sup> ~~that~~ evening? He hung about the kitchen when Pinkie went shopping, hoping <sup>Hanni would look</sup> ~~she'd~~ come; but she didn't come <sup>all</sup> day. <sup>Hanni</sup> ~~she~~ appeared from Hampton Court Sunday afternoon, without Dick. <sup>But</sup> He couldn't do it. Then he suddenly forced himself, when Pinkie was in the bath, and he and she were sitting in the kitchen. Had she been with Pinkie Friday evening? "Yes," she replied without a flicker. They were with 'Joe Clockwork', she added. She had a sane, cool expression, which made his pain worse, because he could see how far he was from others. He was no wiser: why shouldn't there have

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been four of them on Friday evening---Grove and Clockwork? He'd meant to work on the report over the week-end but could only sit gazing in front of him. He wouldn't go back to Basrah; <sup>no,</sup> he had no projects; <sup>now</sup> it even felt peaceful; he sat staring in front of him in a state of raw nerves, with hardly the will to make himself a cup of tea, much less open a book or go for a walk. He couldn't sleep, also. It was like actually living inside a dream. Nothing was quite tangible. <sup>Reality</sup> ~~It~~ was at second remove behind his raw nerves. He would suddenly wake up after dozing and say to himself, "Of course, it isn't true!" And the truth would dawn on him slowly again like a pale light.

He worked at the office as best he could; downstairs in the ~~dining room~~ <sup>canteen</sup> he only pecked at his food; he was anxious to get to the bar, and went back upstairs in the afternoon unsteady; the secretary found him much more jolly and relaxed, <sup>and behaved less mechanically.</sup> ~~to judge by the way she smiled at him and even sat down at his side while he tried to decide something, and smoked.~~ <sup>was drinking</sup> Dick hardly spoke to him, going about his work. Hanni came in <sup>after work in</sup> the evenings and manicured her toe-nails by the fire. He <sup>tried</sup> to disburden himself; but before Dick he was ashamed; Dick avoided people in trouble, and invalids; before Hanni he was afraid she might use the information against him one day. With a trembling hand he phoned up the Marquis to find out if the hair-girl was there. To his surprise she was, and with a trembling voice he asked her if she'd like to go to the zoo with him---he said the zoo on the spur of the moment; he was <sup>even</sup> more surprised when she <sup>took</sup> ~~seemed to take~~ him <sup>as his word</sup> ~~seriously~~ and said she'd love to; he <sup>expected</sup> her to ring off in a huff; but she asked <sup>politely</sup> how he was! He'd done it! Suddenly -- <sup>after all these weeks!</sup>

He made it for the following afternoon; <sup>and the next day</sup> he simply walked out of the office at the end of the morning and didn't go back, but caught a bus to Regents Park. <sup>He hadn't said a word to the secretary.</sup> It was another lovely, warm day, and his black clothes were stifling. <sup>The hair-girl</sup> ~~she~~ was amused by them and also impressed; she made him put his arm in hers, and ~~she~~ walked proudly along. It gave him a sense of sacrilege against her---that he wasn't fully aware of her; he only saw things through

his pallor, dimly and weakly. He was only concerned with not showing his nervousness; his eyes twitched and he had to squint them against the sunlight. His bones ached from lack of sleep. He asked himself what they were doing together? She said "Gee, look at that!" to everything, and he smiled; she said he seemed much happier and easier than on the first day she'd seen him. He gave her a little squeeze on the arm when she said this; apparently, such <sup>gestures</sup> things were enough; what a ridiculous world! ~~You only had to be a puppet!~~

n.p. She walked with her head slightly down as before, preoccupied, making small jerky steps; this time she was <sup>w</sup>wearing a bright print dress, which made her look like a little girl, dark-skinned, with deep, peering eyes. Her hair was tied in a ribbon behind, neatly, falling in one strand. He asked her how the dancing was going on and she said that 'the darkies' were annoying her as they always had done; and that her father had always warned her against them; once more she said that if things were different, as they'd been when she was a child, those 'darkies' would be calling her miss and making their salaams to her. She kept her voice down; she was even demure. [As they reached one of the chimpanzee-cages one of <sup>the animals</sup> ~~them~~ bent down, doubled up for a moment, then swung to a lower bar; there he sat for a moment, and then, gazing placidly at the spectators outside, <sup>he</sup> began to masturbate. He did hit with quick little movements. A woman <sup>near</sup> by ~~them~~ with a sharp nose and sad lines round her mouth <sup>quickly</sup> ~~sharply~~ <sup>her</sup> to the two children, ~~she had with her,~~ "All right, that's enough," and pulled them away; there was personal indignation in her voice. The hair-girl <sup>and bellowed,</sup> laughed ~~for~~ "Now just look at that! You dirty old man!" He laughed as well and suddenly the chimpanzee subsided and looked at them both with an open mouth, peering at them, his hands at his sides; ~~he told her that~~ he'd heard that monkeys think you're angry when you laugh or smile, <sup>Granville</sup> ~~because that was what they did themselves, but she appeared not to hear him;~~ ~~he~~ had difficulty in making his voice come out properly; it cracked and droned. [While they were walking towards the elephants she suddenly asked him, "Don't you ever go out with your wife?" She gave him

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a dark, upward glance. He said he did sometimes, and asked why she wanted to know. She'd met Pinkie, she told him, at <sup>that</sup> the party she gave ~~at~~ <sup>she said.</sup> ~~the party~~ they never seemed to be together, <sup>^</sup> "Why should we be together?" he asked her. "What?" she said, turning and looking him full in the eyes, so quickly that her hair swung round from one shoulder to the other. "What's the good of marriage, then?" He said, "Well, one's still got to have a life of one's own." "Why get married, then?" ~~she asked.~~ He shrugged, completely done-up. "We go out together sometimes," he murmured. "But she's beautiful! I thought she was the sweetest kid at the party!" she cried. "I can't understand it! Aren't you scared she'll run after somebody else?" And again he shrugged. There were the delighted cries of children near by. They came to the gravel path where two elephants plodded slowly up and down, bearing awed-looking children on a great saddle which swayed slightly, close to the trees. <sup>The elephant's.</sup> Their eyes had a smoky and merciful look in the midst of black, wrinkled, leathery skin, old and tiny.

They went to the lion house, where the air was thick and stifling. Sometimes a roar boomed out across the hall. Sunlight poured in through the tall windows and the arched doorways; there was a lioness padding up and down close to the bars, dark, with blazing eyes; her vast paws thumped softly on the floor and her coat rubbed against the bars as she searched the distance. The onlookers, tiny and shifting, were absent to her; she looked far over their <sup>heads.</sup> shoulders. Her paws levered her smoothly and quickly along, and her body was tense with <sup>watching.</sup> attention. It was near feeding-time, somebody said. Then she stood quite still, her head high. She was entirely concentrated on her object. An attendant had appeared, far at the other end of the hall, and his pail made a clanking sound. All the animals were up at once, and the prowling walk went on in all the cages. The attendant jumped down into a pit running in front of the cages and began walking along <sup>it,</sup> ~~them,~~ whistling. A lion gazed down at him as he passed, golden and red-maned, his mouth open so that his long white teeth showed slightly, his head lowered, watching the

tiny figure pass underneath, with friendly, intrigued eyes. The man reached the lioness and said something to her; the crowd moved closer. The man was small and thin, whippet-faced, with sharp eyes. She gazed straight down into his eyes, peering at him in his tininess, her <sup>e</sup> had a littel to one side, trying to understand his speech. All the time he spoke she watched him and sometime she glanced at his pail, looking for the connection between his speech and that. He put his hand in the pail and she started forward softly, with a quickened interest as if he'd said something startling. He held a <sup>massive</sup> piece of meat before him, lurid red flesh hanging in a strand, yellow-streaked. Then with a quick accurate movement he threw it into the cage and she leaped on to it before it reached the ground, tearing at it with a deep sustained growl that was also like a croon of sympathy for the caught ~~beast~~ prey.

He hardly remembered leaving the hair-girl <sup>that afternoon;</sup> she was intrigued by his silence and kept shooting him quick glances. Now and then he put a question to her mechanically. It was one of those endless summer days when the air has <sup>d</sup> a fevered <sup>and disquieting numbness;</sup> kind of ~~drunkenness~~, he took a bus down to Marble Arch through St. James's park. ~~alone~~ and then walked across to the City ~~going out of his way~~. There were lovers everywhere, and he watched the ducks cleaning themselves at the edge of the water <sup>licking their tails.</sup> The streets were rather deserted, as on a holiday. He kept on thinking of the lioness, and heard her strange croon of sympathy as she tore at the flesh. He felt drained and withered; there was half a bottle of wine in the kitchen which someone had left, and he drank it in record time; Pinkie had gone to bed.

To make it worse, as the days went on, he began to feel a terrible desire for <sup>Pinkie.</sup> ~~her~~. But he couldn't bring himself to touch her or even speak <sup>to her.</sup> He remained sunk in a chair in the music-room in the evenings. The previous week, when he and Dick had travelled to the office together, seemed positively ages ago. Only the immediate purposes of his body counted, nothing else; his desire for her was <sup>and gripped in</sup> a local ~~need~~, ~~something to do with~~ his genitals, not spread in his body <sup>cut</sup> gnawing at him, disconnected from the question of her

character, that being past hope for him. He watched her surreptitiously <sup>which</sup>  
~~as she watched.~~ His mind began to work in that thin way) he'd always been  
 taught at school was true thinking; only the little brain-box ticked over!  
 It worked alone, ticking abjectly about life, making its own painstaking,  
 grim calculations, without moral drive behind it; there was no will in him.  
 The brain had the run of his whole being; but it had no direction except to  
 serve local needs. It was a pleasure to have this <sup>moral</sup> drive gone; the loss of  
 will left a trembling placidness. He didn't care. He looked at his report  
 on the desk, neatly laid out, and wondered that he'd ever had the sustaining  
 power to get that far. Life was now piecemeal, simply events. He waited  
 listlessly for the next event to turn up. Were some people always like that,  
 he asked himself, ~~was that what life was like for~~ <sup>the</sup> people who <sup>were</sup> ~~deadly~~  
 factual ~~and~~ ~~were always~~ crisp and reasonable?

He thought he might try to construct his life on these shambles; let  
 him apply his mind coolly; let him decoy Pinkie artfully, to satisfy his sex;  
~~needs~~ with no moral drive his brain could work coolly towards its ends;  
<sup>ends in a word,</sup> these <sup>o</sup> were his own comfort. Thank God that was still with him!

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But he dared <sup>d not</sup> touch her; he had to overcome the sense of humiliation;  
 and yet the humiliation was part of the pleasure; it was the desire; the  
 more he felt it, the more his desire was stimulated; he remembered when she'd  
 been brazen with him, recently; the memory was exciting!

He worked at his pride, trying to break it down; let him talk to her,  
 as a beginning; the silence had to be broken down; then their life would  
 grow together again on the new thin basis. This was difficult because she  
 gbitted her teeth against his feelings; this was clear; she went <sup>of the house</sup> out without  
 saying <sup>a</sup> a word; she no longer cooked the meals; the wonderful desserts and  
 meat loaves were finished. Deliberately one morning she said to him, before  
 they both went off to work, "Oh, I shall be out for a day or so." He couldn-  
 't answer her, only stared. A scheme occurred to him of locking the down-  
 stairs door and stopping her getting out; he hadn't thought her capable of

staying out the whole night; he realised how much hope there had still been in him, in the deep regions! He looked panic-stricken and she seemed to take pity on him. She said she <sup>only</sup> meant she was going out for the evening. He suggested breathlessly that they go and see a film together; she agreed in a perfunctory way; she was watching him, her eyes flickering curiously. Her face showed the slightest sign of unstiffening. [He spent <sup>that</sup> the day wandering about Soho; office-work was out of the question, and at about half-past four he rang the ~~Secret Weapon~~ and told her that he'd been up <sup>to</sup> in Birmingham and was delayed; would she lay out such-and-such a file for him, as he was coming in an hour earlier <sup>next</sup> in the morning? He ate in a noisy Italian place with marble-topped tables; the narrow, bustling streets <sup>of Soho</sup> were a comfort to him, with their <sup>touch</sup> suggestion of foreign life. When he got back he found to his surprise that both Dick and Pinkie were there; he had a sharp sense of foreboding as he walked up the stairs, and his stomach did a turn; there was the smell of <sup>Pinkie's</sup> ~~her~~ scent outside the bathroom. Dick nodded to him when he walked in, without saying anything; Pinkie was next door in the bedroom putting the last touches to her hair; he almost dared not mention the cinema; it seemed out of the question that she <sup>could</sup> actually come. [He asked her if she was going out, and she turned to face him slowly, her eyes lost and liquidly blue, as they sometimes were when she went out alone. She said she was; just round the corner; she'd forgotten about the cinema---some other time; she was going round to 'pick up an ear-ring' she'd lost; didn't he remember? Those ones in the shape of the Muslim crescent? He'd pointed out the loss to <sup>her</sup> herself; he ought to know, she said. [He didn't want to say too much because of Dick being within earshot, but he managed, "Can't you cancel it? I was keen on seeing a film!" She coolly unscrewed a lipstick and began touching her lips. No, it was impossible <sup>she said;</sup> she'd fixed it up at the office; 'this fellow' had hung on to the ear-ring just to get her round to his flat; as the ear-ring was precious to her she'd have to <sup>c</sup> face the music; Dick chuckled next door. He went on asking her to make it another evening but she wouldn't budge.

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She went to the bed and pulled on some knickers under her skirt so that the elastic made a little smack on her skin. "Can't he bring it round here?" he asked abjectly. She laughed: "Good God, I wouldn't want him round here!" She walked past him coolly, her high heels making a soft scraping sound on the carpet, and he caught her scent again, something like roses, clean and disquieting. "Oh, Christ," he went on, following her into the music-room, "I came back specially. Why didn't you let me know?" She was adamant. He'd never dragged after <sup>her</sup> like this before! Dick sat there on the arm of a chair, swinging one leg. He felt hot and ungainly. Also he had a protective feeling towards Grove of all people; where was he tonight? He was aware of another hope that had still been sound in him, that while she might betray him she was incapable of betraying Grove as well---namely, doing <sup>it</sup> for its own sake! His brain in its new abject capacity even suggested a compromise, that she should be allowed Grove if <sup>she</sup> ~~she~~ <sup>agreed to</sup> confined her betrayals to him! She picked up a small velvet bag from the mantel-piece and walked out of the room with a little wink at Dick. He went to the lavatory, not wanting to face Dick alone, and waited there until he heard <sup>him</sup> go upstairs to the kitchen; then he left the house again. There wasn't a sound in the street. A bird came and perched on the railing, a blackbird, and made a sad, distinct little song, his <sup>tiny</sup> head uplifted and his ~~tiny~~ yellow points of eyes shimmering; then Granville disturbed him and he flew off. It was the first blackbird he'd seen here. He walked until he was exhausted and then returned; to his surprise she was already back; it was only ten. He was elated as he walked up the stairs, hearing her talk to Dick, but he checked his walk so that they wouldn't notice. He heard her tell Dick that after the second dance and the second stiff drink the 'bounder' tried to 'get fresh', but she ~~snatched~~ the ear-ring and made off. His relief was extraordinary; he wanted to get in touch with Grove at once and celebrate the soundness of her character! He almost liked Grove. Perhaps it was fate's subtle way of resigning him to Grove's existence. Eventually, perhaps, one could accept everything? With enough food

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and drink, and enough money in <sup>your</sup> ~~and~~'s pocket for an evening out, perhaps <sup>you</sup> ~~could~~ could let life do whatever it <sup>liked</sup> ~~wanted~~ with <sup>you?</sup> ~~what~~

*Cal* The next evening she was out again and when she came back he heard her take a bath. He went into the bathroom afterwards, while she was dressing in the bedroom, and saw that she'd <sup>been</sup> ~~used~~ <sup>ing</sup> her <sup>vaginal</sup> ~~douche~~; that was strangely careless; why should she use it unless she'd slept with someone? But he couldn't recollect if she used it whenever she took a bath; the impression stuck, however. He prevented his eyes showing any expression. There was pleasure involved in his examining the douche; it was a painful sexual delight, taking his breath away. His desire was being stimulated all the time; first there was the shock of discovery, then the desire began gnawing at him. He must let the brain go on ticking with its closed life, far behind the eyes; the eyes only twitched and fluttered, no longer the windows of the soul---or perhaps <sup>they were</sup> ~~more~~ <sup>widens now</sup> ~~drastically~~ <sup>than ever before, ~~was~~</sup> ~~as~~ if he could only see himself; he dared not look in the mirror; when he shaved in the morning he used a small magnifying mirror that Dick had left behind *n.p.* once, thus avoiding his <sup>own</sup> eyes. On the week-end she went about the house cleaning, and played the piano for the first time since his return to England; it brought the tears to his eyes; it was some Scarlatti, which she always played well, with calm, deft fingers; he stood on the stairs listening, his desire soothed a little; the playing was so lovely; it drifted through the house; he didn't go down into the music-room because it embarrassed her if she knew he was near by while she played. There was a stormy sky, that evening, with great heat. Sweat poured down his neck as it used to in Basrah; he could <sup>feel</sup> ~~his~~ rash again <sup>on his neck,</sup> ~~awakened~~; how would he be able to face those suffocating, fly-blown days again alone? It made him shudder. He remembered the tinkling of ~~the~~ palm-tree by his balcony in the middle of the night, <sup>and</sup> ~~in~~ the last month, when Pinkie <sup>hadn't been</sup> ~~wasn't~~ there, and his feverish fear that it was somebody climbing up. How would he be able to bear it <sup>again, alone?</sup>

Next morning his mind failed him with its humble little plans; he'd planned to approach her subtly, with hard calculation, <sup>decoying</sup> ~~deceiving~~ her sex so that it

*exciting, seeming to*

would be all the more ~~delightful~~ <sup>coming</sup> from a stranger, behind the veil of their silence together. But he ruined everything; a moment after they woke up, before his eyes were open and his mind was aware of what his desires intended, ~~to do~~, he put out his arm towards her in a carressing movement, with the old sincerity, and began kissing her neck, his will flooded out by yearning. She did exactly what she'd done before; she was alert at once and he could feel her

J.C.

blinking, the tiny lashes fluttering against his cheek; and again she stiffened with panic. <sup>But</sup> Suddenly <sup>this time,</sup> his abjectness was gone; he kicked at the bedclothes with one terrific push of his leg and, quiet awake, jumped off the bed with an odd kind of roar, giddy, and then ~~he~~ pulled up the whole bed with his two hands, <sup>surprised at his own strength, then</sup> and lifted it until there was danger of her being <sup>squashed</sup> pressed against the wall;

she screamed exaggeratedly, as if knives were being used, and with a sudden reversion to light-heartedness, so that she could have laughed, seeing her crumpled up on the edge of the bed like the heroine in a melodrama, and ~~drawn her~~ <sup>he let the bed fall again. It</sup> ~~into his arms and ragged her,~~ <sup>She</sup> came down with ~~the bedmaking~~ <sup>an almighty</sup> ~~clang and shaking~~ <sup>heavily</sup> the whole house. He ~~jumped on the bed, towering over her~~ <sup>thump</sup>

and

Now he didn't know where to put himself; he wanted to undo his action, and put his mind back into its <sup>underground,</sup> clicking life again. But he couldn't. With a <sup>final</sup> ~~show~~ of disgust he pulled all the beclothes off and flung them across to

h.p.

the other side of the room; then he stalked upstairs. If only he'd kept himself in check! He'd ruined everything! It would take him another two days

falls

to build up the grim, satisfying muteness; and then, slowly, he would remove her veil. He made some tea and began to feel still and soothed. The house was in silence. A few minutes later she came up in her dressing gown, pale and with the trace of tears on her cheek. He noticed at once when she looked at him that her eyes <sup>e</sup> were devoid of any feeling towards him, even hatred. They'd never been like this before. She sat down and pulled a cup and saucer toward -s her, still gazing at him, her hair dishevelled, and said quietly, "You bloody little clerk. Who do you think you are, <sup>exactly?</sup> ~~a genius or something?~~" And she continued to gaze at him dully, all the consideration gone out of her eyes.

he wanted to put out his hand and call her back, "No, Pinkie, don't do that!" It was so profoundly against ~~her~~ her character. She didn't feel, he knew it, that dull, nauseated disrespect for other people which was showing in her eyes; ~~she felt hatred or fear but not this total denial of the other person's right.~~ He sat under her gaze, frightened. ~~He was sure it was another person's spirit in her;~~ "those were Grove's eyes," he thought.

*w.p.*  
*ital*  
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'I'm not in her any more,' he thought. 'My spell's gone.' He realised dumbly what respect she must <sup>have</sup> had for him before; by its absence now. He got up and her <sup>hard</sup> eyes followed him; then she blinked and looked down at the table again, ~~perhaps she knew what she'd done.~~ He went and lay on the bed downstairs, hollowed-out. He could see himself from outside, ~~stagnant~~ as white flesh, discarded; his flesh lay on the bed, ~~and~~ only his mind kept life going; otherwise he had no self. After all, she was so near him, and had been for five, six years, thinking everything <sup>with him;</sup> together; now a whole element of himself was taken away; it was like being drained of blood; he lay panting! ~~was~~ An uncanny feeling: his body was occupied by nothing. The sky looked deathly and bleak outside, ~~and~~ its grey light touched every object in the room. ~~was~~ Impossible that enchanting things could exist. She came and swept up her office-things from the room and dressed in the bathroom, and then he heard her leave the house. She was right, he thought; how frightfully he behaved! He deserved to be hollowed out; he must learn to look at it like that every day; he had to protect her, against herself as well; he had to soothe the <sup>t</sup>ears she shed because of him; he must see that the affair with Grove went well; in that way she <sup>could</sup> keep her beauty; why couldn't he do that? Why not be her guardian, and go into her tears, be inside her all the time, beyond sex? That would be a real intimacy, beyond people! He mustn't diminish her in any way.

Tears filled his eyes; it began to patter with rain outside; he heard what she'd said again---he was a ~~damned~~ <sup>damned</sup> little clerk. ~~This was the worst~~ thing she'd said to him. <sup>suddenly</sup> He realised how precious his thinking was to him.

*ital*

his 'problems'! NSV a little clerk - no - !

The tears fell down the side of his face in a mechanical way, independently of him; he simply felt them streaming down. And it wasn't crying on his own behalf; he had the calm sensation behind his tears that he was crying for what men did; ~~self didn't enter into it; he was crying for what life was,~~ it was a lament for what ~~people did to each other,~~ as if ~~self~~ self had drained out of him and he was only the instrument of <sup>was this</sup> ~~this~~ unearthly lament that brought the tears pouring down his face while his eyes stared quite calmly in front of him?

Life was,

But what was he, in himself? Let him look at the matter clearly. All he had was ~~this~~ faith in himself. What was he, more than a clerk? He remembered the shock a few nights before when Dick had got up to look at the 'Racing Times' with Pinkie. ~~Why should he assume that what he said was interesting?~~ ~~Suppose it was boring for Dick?~~ ~~Suppose a water-tight betting system was more interesting than what he had to say?~~ ~~Suppose his tone of voice was boring?~~ ~~And his ideas worthless?~~ <sup>problems were nothing?</sup> Suppose the moment he leaned forward to speak he scared people off? He was bled dry; he couldn't lift his head;

n.p.

he'd reached the ultimate static depth of unbelief. Slowly he revived; the spirit stirred and began to awaken in him; it was like a hand stretching out and beginning to ~~stir~~ <sup>stir</sup> with life. He told himself that this was a point at which every man had to be blind, and not know what he was, and be prepared to go on in blindness; something in life, at an essential point, had to be accepted blindly; civilisation rested on ~~its~~ <sup>that</sup> there had to be a blind point of faith; there <sup>had to be a spark</sup> ~~was the spark~~ in every man ~~that~~ <sup>which</sup> he ~~had to~~ <sup>held</sup> hold up to eternity <sup>against</sup> however ~~much~~ <sup>doubt and</sup> ridicule! ~~in~~ ~~his~~ ~~case~~ ~~him~~ For a moment he fell back: how silly it must look to an outsider, ~~to see~~ a little clerk storming and putting forward his ideas! Who was there in the world to say that his thoughts had meaning? Only himself! He couldn't think of one other person. In the Sussex days he'd always had a faith that people saw the light in him <sup>at once</sup> ~~immediately~~. But ~~that~~ ~~was~~ ~~gone~~ He had to go on in blindness.

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~~The night before she went up to Meodham his desire was fulfilled. It might have been an act of policy on her part; she took pity on him, obeying~~

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The night before she went up to Meedham his desire was fulfilled. It might have been an act of policy on her part; she took pity on him, obeying a deeper wisdom, perhaps. She got into bed naked, switching the light out first, leaving her pyjamas under the pillow; at one moment she had been standing in her skirt and blouse, with her shoes off, while he lay in bed, and the next she had switched the light out and was slipping her clothes off quickly; and he felt her cool flesh against his. She'd just come in from an evening-out; her story was that she'd been to the café and taken a taxi back. <sup>But</sup> There was a tremulous excitement about her, quivering in her body, and she <sup>was already</sup> wet between ~~her~~ legs; his sudden excitement --- a servant that answered her at once --- was almost unbearable, touched as it was with horror; ~~that the wetness~~ <sup>might have</sup> ~~come from a recent contact, blended with the forbidden,~~ <sup>there</sup> was an image, that both tortured and drugged <sup>him,</sup> ~~his mind,~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~his~~ <sup>another</sup> ~~other~~ contact.

It was a numbed, absent act with the echo of something intimate underneath, like a silent <sup>message;</sup> ~~message between them,~~ the moment it was over, as after a successful operation, there was great calm, a sense of cleanliness and light, and a certain air of convalescence. It wasn't quite the subtle act he'd been steeling himself for, in which he'd get behind the veil to where he could feel Grove's spirit in her and accept it; but it left him satisfied. He felt quiet and soothed, and next day he saw her off at the station.

She looked fresh and young in a print dress, and they blew each other a kiss as the train drew out, its windows flashing in the hazy sunlight, making her eyes twinkle; there was a sudden <sup>affection</sup> ~~affection~~ between them; he wanted to run after the train; they ~~had~~ <sup>seemed to</sup> both ~~recollected~~ something. He strolled back to the house with his hands in his pockets. Miraculously the burden lifted from him.

That evening he went to a concert at the Albert Hall and had a sense of returning to himself, and of life at Chaworth Road as being foreign to him. He read in bed afterwards, sipping cocoa; he hadn't lived quietly like this for ages, it seemed; the calm flowed through him; his thoughts were clear; ~~how wide~~ the life he led was alien to him. He was astonished at the balm that flowed <sup>through</sup> ~~over~~ him simply from being alone. In the morning he made tea on the gas-ring in the bedroom and sat in bed drinking it, the curtains still closed. The room, again to his surprise, looked settled and cosy, its objects rooted there. For weeks past he must have been in a fever, by comparison with this. It occurred to him that he wasn't worried about her at the moment; that was the main relief, perhaps; she would have a good, clean life with Elizabeth and the children; the nightmare would lift for a few days; she would cook and gossip; she always bloomed in the country and looked ~~like~~ a different person. Elizabeth was sane and responsible, accustomed to running a large household.

So he rested, infinitely, sleeping longer than usual and browsing through his travel books for hours in the evening. Hanni and Dick appeared to feel this when they came over; there was the old simplicity between them; Hanni cooked <sup>them</sup> ~~them~~ meals, humming.

It reminded him of the previous spring in Basrah. Everything had been sparkling and lucid then. There'd been no dangers. The house had been quiet and spacious, with clear sunlight streaming through the corridors, and the lawns of the consular district had been a dazzling green. He and Pinkie had gone for picnics, even as far as Babylon once, in somebody's private plane; and they ~~had~~ had tea in the garden, under the banana trees, almost every day.

During those lovely spring weeks he'd undergone a change which he thought would affect his whole life. The eclipse had happened

then. It had seemed <sup>such</sup> a small ~~or/with~~ thing: he <sup>had</sup> ~~had~~ spent the ~~whole~~ night awake in his room, thinking. And in the morning he felt he'd never seen things so clearly, or answered so many questions. It was <sup>seemed</sup> ~~as if~~ the lucidity of the weather had actually come inside him, and he was part of it.

But after that, contrary to his hope, life had become darker. The month without Pinkie had been darkness itself. And since then he'd fallen further and further down.

Yet that sleepless night remained a landmark for him, behind a growing mist but always safe.

21

CHAPTER 21.

It had started by accident, just before the eclipse, when he and Pinkie wandered out on to the porch and found Abu Kath'm there.

Abu Kath'm had a round, very flat face with still, black eyes set wide apart, her mouth a thick, straight, yellowish-crimson line. There were henna marks on her brow and chin, to ward off the evil eye, and a hem of her black abba was usually drawn up over her nose, so that her eyes shone blackly in the slit. She stood hardly higher than his elbow and walked in a round, fussy way, but always in perfect silence, her back straight and her head up, going forward softly on her toes, hardly disturbing the sand, her long skirt making a brief circular motion backwards and forwards. There was something too fussy about her--- it annoyed him a bit. She would make ceremonious little bows when she brought the washing over, and once she tried to kiss his feet. But it didn't impair her dignity. She had a dignity that was like a presence behind her, implied by her gestures and <sup>ingratiating</sup> ~~obsequious~~ little nods and smiles, but not actually in them.

He often watched her from an upstairs window overlooking the garden. She would be squatting at the entrance of her mud hut mending <sup>d</sup> clothes or picking bugs out of the hair of one of her grandchildren. Sometimes

she would look up quickly as if she'd heard something and gaze before her, narrowing her eyes a little so that they shone; ~~away~~ and no matter where she looked there always seemed to be the vast desert in front of her. A special silence always seemed to hang round her hut, however much she shouted at the children or fussed about. Her husband came only rarely, on an old bicycle which he leaned against one of the banana trees. He had the same silence and the same distance in his eyes. It didn't matter how many awkward or quick gestures they made, the stillness was always there. And they weren't aware of each other's proximity. They went close together and sometimes spoke loudly into each other's faces. But there was always the same distant stare in their eyes, surpassing people.

The newspapers had been talking for days about the coming eclipse. And the time of total obscuration was predicted to the minute. It was to be a few minutes after three, <sup>in the afternoon.</sup>

Outside, a slight wind stirred the sand, <sup>like</sup> ~~as~~ before a dust-storm. <sup>lay in a great rush.</sup> The city <sup>was very quiet.</sup> Only this slight breeze touched the sand on the pathway outside and sent it whirling up in thin yellow clouds among the palm-leaves. Usually they could hear children playing near by, or cars in the distance. But today there wasn't a sound. The sun still shone, but more and more dimly, as if a high mist ~~was~~ <sup>ed</sup> obscuring it. There was something vaguely disturbing in the air. Perhaps it was only the <sup>silence.</sup> ~~distance~~

The palm-leaves <sup>were</sup> ~~were~~ still like iron, and <sup>the</sup> ~~colours~~ <sup>of the garden</sup> ~~were~~ <sup>were becoming</sup> more lurid as all brightness left the sky. He hadn't wanted to come outside. They'd just finished lunch, and he'd got up and walked to the window. Everything had <sup>seemed to be</sup> ~~been~~ waiting. The sandy undulations of the waste area outside had looked hard like flint, each mound getting more and more fixed, a polished yellow <sup>w</sup> crust. Then Pinkie had said

she'd got a headache, and ~~she~~ added, "Let's go outside!" It seemed <sup>strangely</sup> wrong to go outside, but he nodded. And they walked out on to the porch over <sup>now lay</sup> looking the garden, where everything <sup>was</sup> deep in a threatening silence. The rugged, knarled barks of the banana trees, the ragged grass and the yellow mud-hut with the <sup>endless</sup> shimmering desert beyond, <sup>grew</sup> ~~became~~ more and more contrasted, in a fixed and flat way, as if, though more distinct from each other than before, <sup>these objects</sup> ~~they~~ were all part of the same hard substance and had drawn together in a new, unwholesome intimacy. There was no wind now, not even a breeze. An absolute stillness held everything. Not a leaf or bough moved. The rooms of the house were very dark now. Inside and outside seemed to be drawing into one, and the plants and the trees had the dead immobility of furniture. And the air felt ~~it~~ like that in a room.

Their shoes made a sharp rustling noise on the tiles, and this was covered up at once by the silence. Pinkie was frowning, her eyes screwed up in a tired way. He strolled towards the parapet and looked up at the sky. The sun was crescent-shaped now, almost finished. Why were there no sounds from the city? Pinkie moved to his side and he heard her breathing quite distinctly. The banana trees were black with shadow, their massive trunks like monuments of iron. The crescent, hardly more than a brilliantly curved line, was growing smaller and smaller.

He became aware of a dark movement below in the garden and looked down quickly. He'd forgotten Abu Kath'm was standing there, so much part of the garden had she become. Her black abba was drawn up close to her eyes and he heard her say the greeting Allah bil khair to him under the cloth. He nodded to her. She moved nearer them with her soft, circular motion. Her bare feet made the slightest <sup>h</sup> thudding on the earth. Then she stood still under the parapet,

gazing up at them, and ~~when~~ he noticed that her eyes were troubled, blacker than usual, more fiery and pointed.

She made a long movement of her arm under her cloak and nodded with an urgent expression towards the house; she wanted them to go back inside! Like the colours of the garden the colours of her face had become more vivid under the strange sky. The henna marks on her brow were a more glaring reddish-brown, and the skin round her eyes was luminously yellow. Neither he nor Pinkie moved, only watched her. She nodded towards the house again, her eyes screwed up earnestly. She was standing perfectly still. Everything in the garden seemed immovable, the folds of her cloak like folds of iron. Her sallow, slightly sweating skin could have been ~~made of~~ wax. The sun was almost gone.

Then she said something, speaking very quickly under the cloth in a guttural, hoarse whisper. It hardly touched the silence, and he wasn't aware of her actually ceasing to speak, only of the silence having asserted itself again. The sound was secretive and rasping, from an inhuman depth. It had a certain dryness, like twigs breaking. The voice seemed not her own. Her eyes, screwed up with an urgent concentration, seemed the only human thing in her, as if they were trying to send a message of help across the silence, to corroborate the voice that had come from under <sup>her</sup> ~~the~~ cloth.

He didn't catch any of the words. He raised his eyebrows, to indicate he hadn't understood, but she took this for surprise at what she'd said, and nodded quickly again. Then she repeated the remark, and this time he managed to catch a few of the words. She was saying something about the sun being Allah. Then, "Allah is angry with men," he heard. And this was followed by a sentence something like, "He is hiding his eyes from men" or "He is covering his sight from men in

shame for them!" She repeated the quick, stabbing word for 'shame', that was like a whip of punishment itself---aib, two syllables rushed breathlessly together.

When she said "Allah" she made the slightest backward movement of her head towards the sky. It was hardly enough to be noticed, only a faint swaying motion, with a look of gleaming confidence in her eyes. But there was such an unhesitating intimacy in it that he glanced up at the sun at once, almost expecting to see evidence of what she said. She stood absolutely still, fixed in the garden like the trees. Her eyes were unblinking, staring at him with pin-points of shrewd light. The sun was quite gone now. Over everything there was <sup>this</sup> ~~an~~ uncanny dusk! He heard her repeat the words, "Allah is angry", and she drew the abba closer round her shoulders.

He glanced sideways at Pinkie and saw that she too was looking up at the sky. For a moment it was quite believable that Allah was there, showing his anger!

"How long does it last?" Pinkie asked in a murmur.

He shrugged. No birds were singing. He noticed it for the first time. She strolled to the parapet and leaned forward on it, staring into the bushes under the banana trees. And he yawned.

"I think it's only a few seconds," he replied.

"When was the last eclipse?"

"I don't know---years ago."

He didn't want to speak at all. It felt ~~quite~~ out of place. His voice sounded jagged and unharmonious.

"She doesn't like <sup>us</sup> ~~us~~ being out here," <sup>Pinkie</sup> ~~she~~ said softly, watching Abu Kath'm again.

"No."

But by now the sun was beginning to come back and the weather revive. The fear seemed to have left Abu Kath'm's face. She had a softer look, and the folds of her skirt were no longer like iron. The skin round her eyes had lost its lurid, shining quality.

*u.p.*  
*l.c.* And  
L - One could see the weather had changed just by looking at her. As the sky cleared, so did her face. But he and Pinkie had to look up at the sun and see it appearing, to be <sup>certain</sup> ~~sure~~. That was how they knew. <sup>But Abu Kath'm</sup> ~~And what~~ knew it without the use of her eyes. She was a part of everything else in the garden. Nor did she 'feel' the change in the sun. She was ~~surely~~ part of it. She was part of the weather. ~~Only for him and Pinkie was the sun a detached thing hanging alone in the sky. With her, it~~ was still active, ~~and~~ inside her. And just as everything else in the garden began to change <sup>its</sup> ~~their~~ colour, so did she. She was fixed in nature like ~~one of~~ the trees, whereas he and Pinkie were looking on all the time, their minds active, far from the world round them. The world was 'external' to them. It was 'round' them.

Something of the silence lifted, too. He heard a bird singing alone. There was the faintest breath of wind through the trees. And the light was growing all the time. The desert, stretching far beyond the garden, was bright again, like a huge shimmering sea of yellow. He heard the hushed throbbing of the city again. Why did it come only now? Perhaps the slight wind brought it.

The colours of the garden were drawing out of their sombre, fixed darkness and taking on separate life again. A child shouted in the distance. Pinkie strolled back <sup>R</sup> indoors, yawning.

Abu Kath'm walked away also, back to her hut. The weight and foreboding had lifted from her. She walked in her usual fussy way, her skirt <sup>i</sup> swinging with its curiously soothing and circular motion.

Her body turned a little with each step like an element of the air itself.

He turned back to the house and for the rest of the day his mind kept wandering to her. Really, she'd shown him the afternoon. Without her he would just have seen an eclipse---with his eyes! And he realised for the first time how little part of the world he was.

~~What was his or Pinkie's experience of the eclipse compared with hers? They were unmoved spectators. The sky had no connection with them. It certainly couldn't be angry.~~ But Abu Kath'm talked about <sup>him and Pinkie</sup> ~~them~~ with an air of perfect authority, and made ~~them~~ look ~~like~~ like children <sup>in comparison</sup> ~~in comparison~~---strange, thoughtful, brooding children!

For them the eclipse was an ~~event~~ <sup>event</sup> taking place in a vast, empty zone: the moon moves between the earth and the sun, causing a partial obscuration of the light. There was nothing in this to involve their 'feelings'. It had nothing to do with them. The world was everything 'round' them, as if they were foreigners to it. And this wasn't a philosophy or doctrine on their part. It was a discipline so <sup>deep</sup> ~~profound~~ that it had become ~~simply~~ their way of perceiving things. And only with somebody like Abu Kath'm in front of them did they become at all conscious of this <sup>peculiar</sup> discipline.

Look at the way he'd thought about things on the porch, quite naturally and without question. Abu Kath'm was 'below' him, under the parapet. There were banana trees 'behind' her. Pinkie was at his 'side'. 'Above' them all was the 'sky' (a weather zone, so to speak), and the 'eclipse' was 'taking place' there, a predicted event. He was 'standing' on the porch. It was all like a physicist's survey. But it was the way he perceived things quite naturally.

He thought while he perceived; and the two were no longer separable <sup>in him</sup>.

He was <sup>apart</sup> ~~separate~~ from the things round him. They were in a kind of

~~mathematical~~

mathematical relation to him, 'above', 'below', 'at the side', 'behind'.

The world was like a fixed chart. It was as if a thinker's consciousness had been imprinted on his own so deeply that ~~now~~ <sup>now</sup> there was <sup>now</sup> no other way of seeing things. But Abu Kath'm was ~~involved~~ <sup>involved</sup> with the processes <sup>all</sup> round her ~~all the time~~. This didn't mean she lacked a mind. She had a quick, shrewd intelligence which showed in her eyes. But she didn't have a system of thought imprinted on her.

If the eclipse had affected him he would have said it was 'nervousness' due to 'the weather'. It would have been turned into a scientific type of concept, in which the body was a victim of influences from the 'outside'. Compared with Abu Kath'm, he thought about life all the time instead of actually perceiving and living it.

The comparison induced strange sensations in him; for a moment he could see himself as the Arabs did: ~~he appeared~~ <sup>pale,</sup> a strangely static, withdrawn creature, ~~in his own eyes~~. He seemed not really subject to the processes of life and death, but a spectator of them. The fact was, however, that these processes did still govern us. Therefore, he must have a distorted consciousness!

That evening, after the eclipse, there was a deeper silence in the house than usual. Kath'm the house-boy made a fire in the sitting room, for it was still cold in the evenings. There were no sounds from outside, only a dog barking in the distance now and then. Pinkie was reading the <sup>local</sup> newspaper for English ~~and American~~ residents. They'd planned to eat at the Cabala with one of the branch managers, but Pinkie had said she was tired and he'd called it off.

He sat gazing into the fire, thinking about the afternoon. It was a matter that concerned him very closely, he knew that. → But he couldn't see why yet. ~~Abu Kath'm had talked about God. And she'd~~

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~~Brought him a knowledge of what it actually felt like to believe in God---for a moment. Of course, not 'believe in'---that was already wrong. That meant, for us, believing with the mind. And of course for the mind the idea of somebody, much less something, being in control of the whole universe was inconceivable. The mind had to have a picture. And no picture could be offered of these things.~~

~~But her feeling was quite beyond the mind. Nor was it a feeling, separate and limited, in our sense. It was her <sup>say,</sup> ~~she~~ <sup>she Kath'm</sup> believed in God!~~

*Italy*  
*R.C.*  
 As we believed in trees, or <sup>say,</sup> in our own breathing; These things simply were for us. And Allah simply was for her. The mind didn't enter into it. His vocabulary, 'believing in' God or 'feeling' God, put the matter wrong from the start. And he had to think through these words.

Pinkie went up to bed early and he stayed watching the last embers of the fire. Only a tall standing lamp was on, casting a dim red glow over everything. The room was long and high with folding doors in one wall <sup>which</sup> ~~which~~ led to the dining room, and were opened only when there were guests. Curtains were drawn across them now to hide the rather ugly glass panelling, and they gave the room a shrouded, secret look, like a temple, especially now there was only the red lamp. He half-dozed. All evening he'd sat without a book. Then he became aware of a growing contentment in himself. He stretched out his legs, making a rustling sound on the rush mat, and settled further into <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ armchair. The fire was still hot and the room glowed with a wonderful subdued brilliance, the small black designs of the curtain standing out vividly, like designs on the wall of a mosque. He heard singing in the distance, with the thump of a drum. It was a servant in one of the consular gardens, perhaps. The dum-buk made smart little raps, exciting and subtle. The song seemed not to be developed <sup>ing</sup> in time, but static, <sup>like an endless wail,</sup> His mind was asleep for a moment, in second place, contented. The

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i Kath

glowing room was like an indoor night, its objects fixed like stars, with that breathing stillness of trees. It was like having life in depth instead of movement; he was only aware of the present moment; but the present moment was endless, in depth, there being no sound or movement to recognise time by. This had a strange relevance to his other thoughts. Only his mind could have told him that time was getting on, that bed was waiting, that Pinkie was already asleep. But for the moment there was only the present, like eternity captured. Surely the mind always brought the shadow of death over an experience, by announcing the horizon beyond present time? taking us out of the depth of eternity? <sup>Did</sup> Abu Kath'm really live <sup>that</sup> inside present time? But we'd got broken off! We moved at a tangent all the time!

He felt drawn right into life, sucked down by the glow of the room and the distant, whining song. There was no death for the moment. The mind pointed out no frontiers.

The song ended, and his mind was roused again. He looked at his watch and was surprised to see it was past midnight. Pinkie was probably asleep by now. He decided to sleep in his own room, which he did whenever he worked late.

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Before turning off the light he looked back at the hearth again, where there were the last dusty embers. The room was very still; long and brilliant. He ~~wondered~~ <sup>Did</sup> if Abu Kath'm lived all the time with the fullness of <sup>that</sup> the moment he'd just had? Was that what real life was like? Was that why she had endless patience? Once he <sup>had</sup> told her to guard the house all day while he was away, and she'd taken him literally, and had sat squatting on the doorstep for eight hours, until he returned, without the slightest impatience, *her abba drawn close over her head.*

He closed the door and felt his way along the corridor to the stairs; on the first landing there was a double window where he ~~was~~

sometimes stopped to watch Abu Kath'm on the lawn below. The sky was bright and he could just make out her yellow hut, a dimly shining hump with shadowy trees behind it. And beyond, stretching into vagueness, lay the desert, a whitish mass that seemed to move, because it was hardly distinguishable from the sky. He stared at it for a few moments, and it disappeared. Then he looked down at the garden again, a black oblong, and once more it became visible, like a moving shroud in the night. There wasn't a sound. No dogs were barking. On this side of the house he couldn't hear the singing. Yet he had no sense of solitude. He had the impression of actually breathing the night, the source of his breath being the same stillness that lay outside. He turned round to look at Pinkie's door on the next landing and saw that her light was out. His shoes scraped on the stone stairs, and he went up on tiptoe. He didn't want to disturb the silence. It had the same commanding <sup>e</sup> integrity as during the eclipse.

He opened the door of his room carefully and could make out his sparse objects there---the narrow bed by the right-hand wall, the desk under the window and the rush matting in the centre of the floor. It was simple, rather like a monk's cell. He didn't want to switch the light on but walked through the darkness on to the balcony that led from his room. A faint breeze came through when he walked out, touching his face. He could see the waste area below with its <sup>little</sup> mounds and craters, and the path between the palm trees that served for a road, its sandy floor shining dimly between the stiff leaves. A dog barked in the distance, then it was still again. The palm tree at the edge of the balcony tinkled for a moment, and the breeze made the sound of a distant wave, rising and falling back again. Everything was composed of shadow, furry and soft; even his hands were unsubstantial like dust, hanging at his sides.

He pulled the door closed again and went over to his bed, where he

lay down, propping the pillow up behind him and pulling a blanket over his feet. How paltry Abu Kath'm made his past thoughts about 'believing in<sup>e</sup> God', in the Sussex days and after! God was for her---it didn't matter whether you called <sup>it</sup> God <sup>or</sup> the sun, or what. For the first time in his life he'd glimpsed the other state of being, for which he'd been searching since childhood! That was why he'd thought about her all afternoon. He'd arrived at a turning-point in his life, as far as thinking went---he was sure of that!

He tried to remember his earliest thoughts about religion. He'd been sent to St. Mary's in Abbott's Road every Sunday. What had happened? What had his thoughts been there? He racked <sup>a</sup> his brains, trying to remember. At St. Mary's there were dark mahogany pews and fat yellow pillars on either side of the chancel; it was quite a handsome church, really. The idea had been to keep him out of mischief more than anything. But what had happened in his mind when he'd heard the words Christ and God? Had he ever believed in God as Abu Kath'm did? What had happened to his religion? And all he could remember <sup>now</sup> was a vague perplexity.

At first, 'God' had been simple, just a gentle presence at the edge of the roof-tops. The image had been dreamy, in the style of childhood. ~~That had continued for the first years of church.~~ But then <sup>those</sup> ~~the~~ confirmation classes had started, and here, he remembered, the problems had begun, <sup>when</sup> ~~at that time~~ He was about thirteen. His perplexity had begun over Christ, whom he'd never really thought about before. Christ, too, had been <sup>simple</sup> ~~simply~~ a ~~gentle~~ figure, like a marvellous elder brother. In his mother's prayers Christ had never been mentioned, only God and people. Now he heard about Christ in detail for the first time. He was raised up by the story, and he was as quickly flung down, into perplexity. And since the day of his confirmation, when a bishop had come

to the church and he'd taken his first---and last---<sup>taste of the water,</sup> ~~communion~~ he hadn't given the matter a deliberate thought. Nobody else had bothered. And the perplexity had remained. But it had remained hidden. Only now had he become aware of it.

The confirmation classes had been held on Sunday afternoons when the church was empty. A group of children sat in the front pew while a young clergyman from another parish talked to them from the chancel steps. At first Granville could hardly take his eyes off the clergyman's face; he thought he'd never seen such clear, good eyes in a person! They never <sup>seemed to</sup> show ~~any~~ <sup>any</sup> ~~kind of~~ <sup>kind of</sup> ~~man always~~ <sup>man always</sup> ~~XXXXXX~~ <sup>And he noticed that the young</sup> ~~XXXXXX~~ <sup>XXXXXX</sup> spoke with a smile when he mentioned Christ. He smiled a little <sup>even</sup> ~~even~~ when he <sup>was</sup> ~~talked~~ <sup>ing</sup> ~~about~~ <sup>about</sup> Christ's death and how they didn't have to break his legs to quicken the <sup>end</sup> ~~head~~ because he gave up the ghost early, while the two thieves still struggled on in the death-throes. He also told them how a soldier had <sup>thrust</sup> ~~thrust~~ his spear into Christ's side, probably to make sure he was dead, and how there was a legend that a drop of the blood and water <sup>from the wound</sup> had fallen on to his face and he <sup>had</sup> ~~had~~ been cured at once of an ~~XXXXXX~~ eye-disease. Even when he spoke about the blood and water gushing out he smiled in a tender way. He had flushed, healthy cheeks and soft black hair, and talked in an easy way, his eyes resting on the children in equality, which struck Granville even then as wonderful in a grown-up, that he should be able to talk with equality to children.

By smiling when he told them about the last moments on the cross and how Christ had called into the darkness, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?', he made it all feel safe and even good: which was very strange.

The church itself had begun to feel a happier place? Before, it had been hopeless and sombre, a place where priests sniffed and haw-hawed through their vague sermons, and coffins were laid in the

chancel, and grim, nervous couples were married, while the trams scraped and rumbled past outside. It was astonishing how the young <sup>clergyman</sup> ~~man~~ could change it so! The sun seemed to shine in at the tall windows more, and the stained glass began to glow mysteriously. It began to look quite a lovely church, with its great clean beams and arches.

As the <sup>confirmation</sup> classes went on he began to associate the gentle look in the young man's eyes with what he was talking about, namely 'Christ'. And he listened more closely. He was determined to be like him if possible, to have those same good eyes. He wanted to be like that when he grew up, without suspicion or reserve. So many people in the streets outside had small eyes which twitched from side to side in a fixed, disbelieving watchfulness. He began to hate the streets at this time. They were ~~like~~ hard, dusty, bleak corridors leading nowhere, grimy and yellow and grey. The trams creaked and clanged, and over everything lay a silence that had nothing gentle in it at all, no rhythm, but was simply a suspension, like a dead face. Even at thirteen he was jumpy and nervous, expecting accidents all the time. There seemed less and less to cling to in his life. The streets offered nothing. Life consisted of quick, unrelated events which didn't comprise a whole experience. It was a hard, disjointed dream.

Only in the countryside had he ever heard the real silence, that had a rhythm in it, like someone breathing. That was a comfort. But otherwise the gentleness in people's faces was his only comfort. When he saw someone 'nice', as Eve, Aunt May's daughter, was 'nice', with her sad, compassionate look, he had a terrific sense of awe. And the young clergyman was 'nice'. But this time there was more than a person. He felt 'Christ' behind it.

The young man talked about Christ intimately, as if he was close by, and Granville began to have a sense of Christ <sup>a</sup> actually being there

on the chancel steps. ~~But~~ The communion rail, the tasselled altar-cloth of crimson and silver, the gleaming altar of gold, seemed to be his home. It was a strange feeling, like discovering who these things belonged to, for the first time. The church began to feel like a house which the owner had just left, so that his golden presence was still in the air, in the ticking clock and the armchair.

He learned that confirmation would give them the right to eat of Christ's body and drink of his blood, symbolically, at the communion rail, for 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh of my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' The meaning of this was only vague for him--- <sup>idiotic, really -</sup> eating flesh and drinking blood---but his mind made a quiet acceptance and he thought of the communion as a silent meeting with Christ that was too far beyond the clutches of ordinary life to be examined thoroughly. Still, it wasn't simple---not like the figure of Christ.

We must always remember, the young man said, that Christ willed his suffering and foretold everything that would happen to him. He had to show people what it meant to forgive and love. People don't believe words. They must have something to look at. And when they saw Christ dying above them on the cross they knew as they would never have known otherwise that he meant every word he'd said. ~~with the whole~~ <sup>ital.</sup> ~~of his own body and blood~~ Here was a man who had used himself as a living demonstration for other people---used his own body! 'Can you imagine that?' the young man asked. 'Do you wonder that his example has never left our minds since?' 'Though ye believe not me, believe the works,' Christ had said. 'And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

~~Every word Christ spoke was baptised for the future by his crucifixion, so to speak. And this was what he had intended. Without~~ <sup>Christ</sup> his crucifixion ~~his~~ would simply have been a preacher---"like me", the

clergyman <sup>said</sup> ~~added~~ with a smile.

But during the last few classes Granville began to feel puzzlement. For ~~Christ~~ wasn't 'nice' in the way he'd thought at first. It began to seem strange to him that his own mother and father should have sent him to church. ~~Or~~ There was a great anger in Christ, often against mothers and fathers. 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword,' he said. 'For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.' Now how was it that his mother and father had sent him there, if Christ wanted to put him at variance with them? And how could the young clergyman tell <sup>him</sup> ~~them~~ to honour and obey <sup>his</sup> ~~their~~ mother~~s~~ and father~~s~~? There was no mistake about it at all! — 'If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' Yet the clergyman always said that Christ was 'good'. And his mother and father had sent him to church so that he <sup>too</sup> would be 'good'. ~~But how~~ **Could** <sup>you</sup> ~~one~~ be good without following Christ? ~~And~~ **How** could <sup>you</sup> ~~one~~ follow Christ if <sup>you</sup> ~~one~~ loved <sup>your</sup> ~~one's~~ mother and father? Look at the man who <sup>had</sup> asked Christ if he might bury his own father before following him! — 'Let the dead bury the dead,' Christ had <sup>said</sup> ~~replied~~. 'He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.'

Did other people hear the same words? Or did they gloss over them in some way? Or perhaps they didn't know about them!

In one of <sup>these</sup> ~~the~~ classes he asked a question about it. **B**ut the young clergyman was vague and seemed not really to understand him. He said something about Christ's calling <sup>being</sup> beyond even his 'nearest and dearest'. 'But how can it be good to hate my mother and father?' Granville thought.

And if everybody were to do it to follow Christ, surely the world couldn't go on, because there'd be no families?

But the other children <sup>didn't</sup> seem <sup>worried.</sup> ~~quite~~ ~~undisturbed.~~ And the clergyman went on talking, with the same smile. And gradually he put aside his doubt. The church was still there with its gleaming altar and tall stained windows. It was all so much bigger than he was. ~~And~~ It had been alive such a long time. No doubt there were reasons he didn't understand. It seemed impossible that so many grown-up people, including the vicar, could be wrong. Perhaps he didn't understand the archaic language of the Bible? And if the bread and wine of the communion were 'symbolical' for Christ's flesh and blood, why shouldn't Christ's words be 'symbolical' in <sup>some</sup> ~~the same~~ way? Perhaps <sup>Christ hadn't</sup> ~~he didn't~~ meant real mothers and fathers, and real brothers and sisters!

Only in the marriage at Cana <sup>was there</sup> ~~did he have~~ a glimpse of a possible meaning. When Christ's mother reminded him that there was no wine, implying that he alone had the miraculous power to bring it, Christ said angrily, 'What have I to do with thee?' and 'Mine hour is not yet come.' And Granville felt a dim understanding of Christ in this mood. It was what he'd often felt with his own mother, when she tried to interfere with him sometimes. But then how could Christ possibly feel the same as he did? Probably the words didn't mean what he thought they did! He took Christ to mean, 'What's it got to do with you?' But that seemed much too familiar! So he accepted the puzzlement, and then put it out of his mind.

And people didn't seem to care. His mother and father didn't seem to know much about what Christ said. And he had the idea that one didn't go to church after one ceased to be a child. Only old fogies went. So the question never meant much to him.

<sup>The</sup> bishop confirmed his class, and he took his first communion. →

l.c. The wafer melted in his mouth with a remarkable swiftness, and he wondered where it had been manufactured. He sought a special holy taste in the wine, which he was told had been blessed, but the sip he took---the cup was pulled away from him almost at once---was too small for him to find out. There was a crowded church and anthems sung by choirs from all over London, he had feathers in his tummy, but all to a purpose he didn't understand.

He was sure, now, that there was something <sup>right</sup> in that first puzzle-ment. And he wanted to get to the bottom of it. ~~Suppose he read the story of Christ again and judged it now, as a grown-up?~~ It wasn't difficult now to imagine that the vicar had been wrong, and the young clergyman, too!

He remembered the Bible that lay on show downstairs under the silver-plated crucifix, belonging to Bertha, and he tiptoed down to get it. The house was so silent that he could hear the rustling of his clothes as he walked. The Bible was one of those family editions with the words of Christ printed in red, and genteel paintings of the disciples. It hadn't been moved for nearly two years, and there was a faded place on the lace cover underneath. 'Well,' he thought, 'I never imagined I'd <sup>ever</sup> use this!' It ~~had been~~ <sup>was</sup> a <sup>little</sup> symbol of Bertha's stuffiness ~~and~~ <sup>And</sup> he'd wanted to get rid of it, but Pinkie had stopped him. ~~But~~ <sup>And</sup> now he picked it up with the same gingerly awe he'd seen in Kath'm's eyes whenever he ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> passed it.

That night, pulling his desk-lamp closer, he read more or less haphazardly <sup>in it</sup> ~~until he began to discover a theme.~~ He was <sup>amazed</sup> ~~surprised~~ at how simple and true-sounding the story of Christ was. Why had he never been taught it, <sup>just</sup> as a story? He felt ~~then~~ he'd stumbled on his own language again after years of silence, and was suddenly talking!

<sup>even</sup>  
 He began to see Christ as a person. That was the important thing. Before, he'd thought of Christ as high up in an abstract zone of godness and difficulty, like so much ~~stuff~~ <sup>else</sup> in his education. He was astonished at how easily he ~~understood~~ <sup>understood</sup> <sup>This</sup> It was the first time he'd really read the gospels. Even now, as he read, absorbed and still, it seemed silly that he should be doing so. He wondered that he could be really interested in it! He realised that he'd always taken the language of the Bible as ~~totally~~ meaningless. It all had a kind of <sup>vague</sup> symbolical application---a ~~grand~~ sort of poetry, perhaps ~~but~~ not meaning much! And here he was reading the words actually as if other men <sup>had written it!</sup> were talking to him in the silence. And he <sup>found</sup> ~~discovered~~ a story <sup>that</sup> which offered no difficulties at all.

How ~~strange~~ <sup>it</sup> was <sup>that</sup> he'd ~~should have~~ been disinherited from this story, in <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ great epoch of education, when, once upon a time, for generation after generation, simple and illiterate people all over the world had found no difficulty in it? What a lot of effort his 'education' was costing him in life!

He began to think of Christ as intimately close to him, and not wrapped up in divinity. Only for a short time in the confirmation classes, moved by the young man's smile, had he felt that intimacy before. Since then, his education had taught him that he had no right to <sup>have feel</sup> ~~claim~~ intimacy---of all things---with great historical figures!

He was amazed at how clearly he could see Christ---like someone standing <sup>in front of</sup> ~~before~~ him, <sup>very</sup> youthful, with an extraordinary calm and sweetness. He could see him sitting in the temple writing in the sand absent-mindedly, with <sup>perfect</sup> ~~that same special~~ repose, before the crowd brought the fallen woman to him, playfully, to see if he <sup>was fool enough to</sup> ~~would~~ bless ~~even~~ a whore. And he could see him standing up and saying angrily that if anybody in the crowd thought he was clean of sin himself he

had the right to judge this woman, but not otherwise! He could see him again, always with this marvellous repose, lying on the couch before taking dinner with the Pharisee, and showing a certain care to the woman who bathed his feet in oil, another <sup>whole,</sup> fallen woman, while the Pharisee sarcastically asked him if he minded being anointed by a sinner? He could see Christ at the well talking to the Samaritan woman in his leisurely, reflective way, arguing quietly with her. That was ridiculous to most Jews<sup>3</sup>--to talk to a woman about God in the first place, and to a <sup>low</sup> Samaritan <sup>as that!</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>neverly,</sup> a heathen ~~in the second place.~~ But Christ was always doing that kind of thing. He was always talking with quiet respect to people who were <sup>thought</sup> considered low or wicked. It was the theme of all the stories. When somebody touched Christ once in the crowd, and he turned, Granville had the impression that he knew how he ~~had~~ turned, the exact gesture, all his life, even from before ~~life~~. Christ stood so clear and fresh among people.

Christ was always talking to people in their lonely state, he noticed---not in their importance. He called to men alone in themselves, <sup>not to notions of greatness or history.</sup> 'Beware of men,' he said, 'for they will deliver you up to the councils.' 'When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.' No priest was <sup>needed,</sup> required. No family was <sup>needed,</sup> required. It required <sup>last</sup> only a man alone in himself. This was what made Christ's teaching <sup>other people</sup> so tenacious from one generation to the next, that it depended not on <sup>one alone</sup> community but on each man <sup>one alone</sup> withdrawing into himself, so that even if the community was disrupted his God was ~~untouched~~.

But the Jews had said no less since Moses---that God was only to be found in secret. <sup>that</sup> And it had been their strength, <sup>too!</sup> ~~as it was the strength of the Christians later on, this gleaming, private strength~~

(This gleaming secrecy)

which nothing could touch. It was the silent dignity that had held the Jews together, ~~through one invasion after another.~~ They were a people chosen by God, Moses ~~had~~ said. And Christ inherited this ~~grand~~ dignity. The difference was that he said that every human creature was chosen by God. <sup>Not just the Jews!</sup> The Jewish gift must be <sup>given</sup> extended to all men! And this was the blasphemy in Jewish eyes---to call even the wicked, blessed, even the low! <sup>To call all of them children of God was offensive!</sup> This meant ~~blasphemy against the state as well.~~ For the state was a religious organisation. It was actually governed by a High ~~Priest~~ Priest.

And all at once Granville saw the connection with his first perplexity as a child! Christ <sup>said</sup> ~~had rebelled against the family, the priests, the father, the government,~~ saying it didn't matter that you were somebody's son or brother, or a man as opposed to a woman, or a Jew <sup>instead of</sup> ~~as against~~ a heathen,---the state of your life was what counted! And if you loved these names instead of God, ~~namely, the secret inside you, which had no social form or name,~~ if you rested on your position in life, you were in a state of ~~sin and it didn't matter what names you gave yourself.~~ <sup>rotten! Christ put his life against</sup> Against the whole suffocating weight of status quo! Christ put his ~~idea~~ <sup>idea</sup> Against this throbbing public life!

Granville remembered being taught that in Christ's time only the descendants of Aaron could be priests. Even the Romans hadn't challenged the sacredness of the Aaron family. And the High Priest alone could penetrate into the mysteries of God. God was so high, in Christ's time, that no one dared even pronounce his name. The Ultimate God of Abraham was gone. The scribes taught the Law, which was religious as well as practical. There was a fixed hierarchy of worship. Foreigners and uncircumcised people were excluded from <sup>His</sup> the mercy of ~~God~~ God. Women were unclean, and ~~were~~ excluded from the Passover. God There was a definite religious state: the highest political power

The State - the high priest governed  
~~was also that nearest God.~~ / for Him.

Therefore Christ's teaching was treason as well. He talked equally to women and whores, to foreigners and heathen. Everybody had an equal power of penetrating to God---equal even to the priest's! It was a devastating argument and in the end took the Jewish God to almost every race on earth.

Christ even showed a special tender care for women, Granville noticed. He raised them to a purity unknown before. In the end three women stood under the cross, his own mother, <sup>and</sup> Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene, while most of the disciples ~~had~~ fled. 'Didn't he do the same, ultimately, for every human creature?' Granville asked himself. 'Raise him to an unparalleled purity?'

In everyone, Christ said, however dirty or wicked or despised, there was that mysterious element of light and silence where he belonged to something that was beyond other <sup>e</sup>men and beyond even himself; and which couldn't be destroyed by other <sup>e</sup>men! So ~~Christ offered~~ <sup>He offered</sup> ~~freedom.~~ <sup>even</sup> No special credentials had to be shown. You could be a slave! Everyone, the most foolish and ignorant person, had this absolute self-responsibility. No wonder the Jews were aghast--- or rather laughed and mocked! ~~There were no slaves for Christ as there were for the other great civilisations.~~

Every man had the power to choose between the light and the darkness. He always knew the difference, in himself! He was alone with his own conscience! The verdict of the ~~High~~ Priest made no difference. And the Law made no difference, if your conscience was active! Only a man alone in himself was the judge of where the light of truth lay. 'He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.'

~~That was why Christ attacked the Pharisees so much. They were~~

l.c.  
 e.c./Tals

9  
~~full of ascetic practices--one of the sects, Granville remembered, were in the habit of running their faces against the wall whenever a woman came in sight. Underneath that Christ saw comfort and apathy. There was no conscience. A real conscience didn't make a show.~~

He didn't depart from his sense of the purity in other people even in the death-agony. For the people who tore his clothes off his back and spat in his face he said, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'

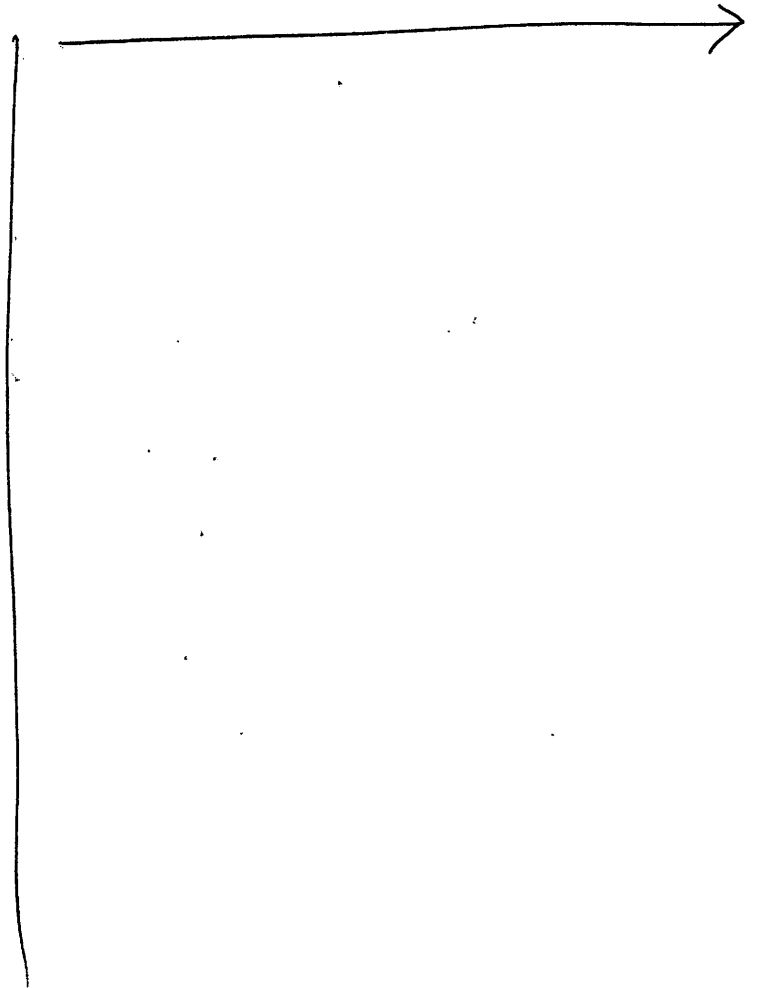
→  
 Hitherto in Granville's life the name 'Christ' had meant, more or less, 'love'. Very well, everybody agreed with love! And he'd never been able to get beyond this vagueness. And Christ had been talked about so many times, after all! Even the crucifixion seemed painless now, especially as 'Christ' was too lofty to engage ~~one's~~ <sup>your</sup> sympathies! He had often wondered, like those who had stood about the cross and mocked him, 'Why couldn't he save himself, if he was really the son of God?' How could <sup>you</sup> one feel Christ's pain as <sup>your</sup> ~~one's~~ own, if Christ was divine and therefore started off with an advantage over everyone else?

And that was the chief difference now. He saw Christ as a <sup>real</sup> person. <sup>like himself!</sup> Before, <sup>held</sup> Granville had never been able to see exactly what had gripped <sup>intoxicated</sup> one generation after another, for nearly two thousand years, in the story of Christ! In the Sussex days he'd <sup>understood for the first time</sup> ~~seen, with an uncon-~~ <sup>fortable perplexity,</sup> that the Christian civilisation had spread across the whole of Italy, and then the whole of Europe and parts of Asia, planting a cross in hundreds and thousands of villages, but he hadn't been able to see how it had happened that so many people had been influenced! He'd only seen it as an historical movement. ~~And that was~~ <sup>the chief difference now</sup> <sup>But now he saw</sup> He'd begun to see Christ through himself. Therefore the crucifixion was real to him <sup>for the first time</sup>. And, also for the first time, since he could see Christ through his own

experience, he could see how extraordinary he was! Of course, if you started by saying that Christ was extraordinary and divine, there was no room for amazement. Only if you <sup>saw</sup> ~~see~~ him as yourself could you be amazed.

Christ seemed to tell the story of a man's pain wherever that man was, whatever language he spoke, whatever epoch he lived in. He didn't waste a gesture! It was all so beautifully conceived, his own life, ~~unfolds slowly like a story~~ spread out like a story which he knew from the beginning. Opinion didn't touch him. He went about his death with an absolutely calm deliberateness, foreseeing every stage because he brought it <sup>about</sup> ~~in a being~~ himself, And the story was discovered again in every generation as something fresh because it was revived in each man's experience, like a flower that while new had the same head as millions before it.

The word 'God' was easier for Granville. It meant the spell--- what had gone out of our lives! ~~And~~ At dawn in the Sussex days, when he'd been on sentry-go, the whole earth had seemed to stir, and then the word 'God' had seemed suitable.



The truth wasn't supported by the number of men who held it. That was Christ! One man alone could hold the only truth in the world!

Granville felt a terrific self-vindication! He did have a place, then, in life; he did have meaning; he did know something without ploughing through exams and books and fighting to the top of the T.I.M. worm-world!

It was a doctrine of terrific courage, it raised the single man to a height unknown before! And this man could be anyone! His strength in the truth would come from beyond him, where there were no numbers or power, but silence! He only had to give up trying to satisfy that little will in himself, or the will of other men. Then the stronger will would come through.

*ital*  
This is what Christ did---he actually did it with his own life! Even when he ~~was~~ said he was the son of God he didn't mean himself with his own little will---which the Jews thought. When they accused him of blasphemy at his trial he asked them, wasn't it written in their own scriptures that 'Ye are gods', that all men were gods? And he was a man! He was any man! All men were the children of God! Therefore his own prayer began, 'Our father.'

*ital*  
Nobody really saw what he meant, apart from the women round him, ~~perhaps~~<sup>or</sup>. The disciples didn't see. You could tell that by the questions they asked him. ~~They were used to prophets~~ They thought he was going to offer them something, in life: or they believed him like children listening to a fairy-tale. When he told them that ~~highly respectable and important people would find~~<sup>people on top</sup> it more difficult than ~~the~~ others to ~~get into heaven~~<sup>found</sup> they couldn't believe their ears! The priests as well? 'And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth them again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.'

*ital*  
Be close to God,

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*Be close to God,*

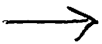
For the disciples he was just a messiah. That meant the man who'd bring glory to Israel again, the kingdom of God on earth, that sort of thing---a fair<sup>ly</sup> tale. When he told them one day that he would soon be dead, and seemed not to care, Peter refused to take him seriously! How could a man who had come to save Israel, get rid of the foreign troops and so on, want to die of all things, before he'd taken one step towards it? How could you save the world by promptly dísappearing from it? No wonder the ones on top laughed!



To P. 757 (a)

~~In the eyes of the disciples he was <sup>just a</sup> Messiah. ~~That~~ meant ~~the man who would~~ bring glory again to Israel, ~~the kingdom of God on earth,~~ <sup>that sort of thing - a fairy-tale.</sup> as other prophets before him had promised. When he told them one day that he would soon be dead, and seemed not to <sup>care,</sup> offer ~~the idea any resistance,~~ Peter scolded him, and refused to take him seriously! How could a man who had come to save Israel, <sup>get rid</sup> of foreign troops, <sup>and so on,</sup> want to die of all things, before he'd taken one step towards it? How could you save the world by <sup>promptly</sup> disappearing from ~~the~~ ~~world~~ ~~the~~ ~~eyes~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~people~~ ~~who~~ ~~had~~ ~~been~~ ~~waiting~~ ~~for~~ ~~him~~!~~

Make



It was the same at the last supper. They <sup>didn't understand</sup> ~~misunderstood all the~~ hints he threw out about his coming death. He told them, 'A little while, and ye shall not see me.' But ~~still~~ they didn't understand! They said therefore, What is this he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto him, Do ye enquire among yourselves of what I said? A little while? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament.'

The darkness of the cross wasn't what they <sup>didn't</sup> ~~expected,~~ ~~at all.~~ Two of them had asked Christ once whether, on <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ day of ~~his~~ 'glory', they could sit one on either side of <sup>his throne!</sup> ~~him.~~ They expected the reward of power. And death was such a baffling answer, <sup>to that.</sup>

Christ's magic was that he didn't ask for any satisfactions to his personal will, not even leadership or dignity. He remained absolutely still even when they were calling up to him to save himself, <sup>on</sup> ~~at~~ the cross.

~~The~~ The silence ~~there was a natural order~~ ~~was~~ ~~deeper~~ ~~than~~ ~~the~~ ~~noise~~ ~~of~~ ~~men's~~ ~~ambitions~~ ~~and~~ ~~virtue~~ ~~of~~ ~~their~~ ~~society~~ ~~and~~ ~~laws.~~ A man <sup>has</sup> ~~had~~ to wait for it, alone and still. ~~was~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~reviled~~ ~~and~~ ~~detested~~ ~~by~~ ~~other~~ ~~people~~ ~~and~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~good~~ ~~and~~ ~~wise,~~

~~was enough to lay a man open to it.~~

~~It all depended on a man's will, not on his place in life or his reputation. 'Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.' Behind everything Christ did there ~~was~~ was this absolutely calm will. He knew his crucifixion would be a proof and guarantee of the powers of a single man, and therefore a wonderful consoling example to lonely people always afterwards. As in everything else, he was perfectly clear about this in his words: 'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.'~~

~~'Was that why I had a sense of joy at Easter sometimes?' Granville wondered---such a light, plentiful feeling even when they were talking about the cross? Was that why the young clergyman had smiled? Was it because Christ had been so lacking in ambitions that you couldn't even cry for him---even grief looked like mourning a personal loss?~~

~~And of course this was what had annoyed Walsh in the Sussex days. Christ wasn't ambitious enough for him. He wasn't a social man. He was meaningless unless he had come to do men 'good'. What Walsh had meant by good was in the interests of men's happiness. And for ~~Christ happiness had only been another ambition.~~~~

He remembered reading about the ancient world in the Sussex days, and finding no theme there that had any importance for him.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

But now things began to fall together. He was surprised how much dead knowledge there was in his mind. The moment it fell into the new connection it was alive.

The Jews had seen great empires collapse all round them, they saw that though they were always passed by as an unimportant little people on the way from Egypt to Persia, they were the only ones to survive. *They survived invasion, massacre, annexation.*

Their God had a perfect, irresistible and consistent justice which men couldn't buy or change. He wasn't a bull or the sun or a man in the sky. He was silent, inside every man---every Jew. And so He survived everything that went on outside. *He was the*

~~This God was the only creator and origin of all known~~

In none of the other great civilisations---Egypt, Greece or Rome--- was there this intimate link between what a man did in the silence of his thoughts, and the grace ~~bestowed~~ bestowed on him from beyond. That 'beyond' was harmonious, it was one thing, it was an order---not various little gods quarrelling in the sky and hurling thunderbolts. The 'beyond' meant peace. It was on your side. That was the relief Christ took all over the world, all over the broken Roman empire---from the Jews!

And of course we now took it for granted. Every one of us! The world has a meaning for us. Nothing is quite haphazard or accidental in our world! It is based on laws. And that sense of laws underneath <sup>life</sup> that never changed was the first lesson of the Jewish religion.

*J*  
~~we now live in a moral system, that is, we conduct our lives with a constant attention to the meaning of what we do and the meaning of events round us. It is all connected. And this we inherited through Christ. Israel had survived all the great empires, and Christ had carried this precious dignity to the rest of the world. It was in this sense that Christ had agreed that the Jews were the Chosen People; 'Salvation is of the Jews'~~

→ 'How strange,' Granville thought, 'that I should have taken all these years to arrive at a simple definition of 'Christian civilisation'!' Yet it was so simple on the face of it! And slowly he was beginning to link together his own life, too. What else had his sense of a silent order in life been, in the Sussex days, when he'd begun to take walks alone, but what the Jews had <sup>given?</sup> mentioned? And his sense of there being a spark in himself, without help from other men? Had he inherited this experience from Christ, unawares, as Christ had inherited it, only more vividly, from the Jews? He was beginning to discover the historical connection he'd been after since childhood!

*J*  
 In everybody, Christ ~~with~~ said, there was a secret place beyond all men. That was ~~as a reward~~ the peace he offered people. Every man had a place where his own infinite integrity lay, ~~that was beyond when himself~~. This place was called God. ~~Death was like floating into it for ever. Gog was, so to speak, the state of death in every man where he was alone and beyond interference by other men, with a natural dignity that came to him from outside, and which closed his eyes in the end. A man wasn't his own possession.~~

*n.p.*  
 Moses had promised the Jews ~~an earthly reward~~. They would have 'great and goodly cities'. It was the one respect in which God did reward men <sup>interest</sup> according to their expectations. And Christ removed this last ~~material~~ reward. His <sup>disciples</sup> expected him to come mounted on

a charger at the head of an army, to remove the Romans. And, deliberately, he came in mounted on an ass. He did overcome the Romans. But not in the method of ambition. His story gradually travelled through the broken-hearted empire, like hope. The empire's roads and ship-routes, running across Europe and Asia, a vast act of ambition, became the roads and ship-routes his story travelled by. Slowly the meaning of what he'd said dawned on people, as it dawned on the disciples, who ~~made~~ wrote the story down.

Christ died on a Roman instrument of torture, kept ~~only~~ for the ~~lowest~~ criminals. He was laughed at while he was dying, his death wasn't important enough to be recorded officially. But he overcame an empire. By giving up ambition he overcame the most ambitious project that the earth had seen.

~~the lowest~~



~~a charger at the head of an army, and then to renounce the Romans.~~  
 And, deliberately, he came in mounted on an ass. He did overcome  
 the Romans. But not in the method of ambition. His story gradually  
 travelled through the broken Roman empire. Its lines of communication, <sup>turning</sup>  
~~which were across Europe and Asia a vast act of ambition,~~ <sup>the lines of communication</sup>  
~~the subject of ambitious organisation,~~ became ~~the achievement~~ channels  
 for his story. Slowly the meaning of his words dawned on people,  
 as it ~~had~~ dawned on the disciples, who made a ~~complete~~ story of it  
 for the first time. ~~at the first time.~~

~~Christ died on a Roman <sup>instrument of torture, the cross</sup> ~~contraption~~ used for the lowest~~  
 criminals. ~~Because it was not important.~~ He was laughed at while he  
 was dying, ~~and~~ his death wasn't important enough to be recorded <sup>in Roman</sup> ~~officially~~  
 ially. <sup>But</sup> ~~Yet~~ he overcame an empire. By <sup>giving up</sup> ~~renouncing~~ ambition he  
 overcame the most ambitious project that the earth had ~~ever seen~~  
~~before.~~

→ 'So things can come about from the silent will of one man,'  
 he thought, 'slowly through the years, working in the darkness unknown  
 to the mind!' How the Pharisees must have laughed! He overcome  
 Rome? And the world? A ~~real~~ <sup>real</sup> prophet' like all the others, ~~before~~  
~~him,~~ with the same paraphernalia of disciples and miracles to catch  
 the popular eye and parables and ominous quotations from the scriptures!  
 Calling himself 'the son of God'?

<sup>5</sup> 'Well, they'd laugh ~~the~~ the same ~~day~~ today,' he thought. 'They  
 want to see <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ plan for the future of mankind.'

But ordinary people went on living as they always had done, in  
 silence, passively, knowing that things did change in the darkness,  
 like the stirring of new roots.

He heard the tinkling of the palm-tree by his balcony. It was  
 about the middle of the night now. The breeze made a hushed sound

outside, touching the window, and he glanced up. Beyond the light of the desk-lamp he could see the window like a square black picture. Though he could see nothing outside he had the same feeling as before, perhaps because of the silence---that everything was unsubstantial like dust, a vast shadow, both the room and the night outside. The room looked fixed, <sup>and yet vague,</sup> its individual things drawn into one unity by the silence.

~~What was this truth Christ had talked about? he asked himself.~~

<sup>But</sup> What did Christ die into? <sup>he thought.</sup> What lay on the other side of death?

n.p./l.c. <sup>But</sup> What was that silent order one became aware of in life? There was a gap behind Christ. 'What do I mean by God?' The experience was missing. <sup>But</sup> The word 'God' must have sprung from a human experience. 'Can I break through the obstruction of <sup>my own</sup> ~~the~~ mind and get near to that experience?' he asked himself. 'And so come to within a shade of believing in God myself?' Hitherto, he'd always regarded 'believing in God' with distant awe. How could anybody believe in God? It was impossible!

Yet all those centuries of men lay behind, refuting him. What did 'God' mean? <sup>r</sup> Hitherto he'd glided over the word. Well, he'd once glided over the word 'Christ'. Now let him see if he could do justice to 'God', too.

He thought for a long time in the silence. Then it occurred to him, 'Consult your own feelings. ~~It~~ Don't try to conceive all the time, with your mind. Go into your real life. What experience have you had of something utterly beyond you, for instance?' Wouldn't there be a clue in that? <sup>l</sup> The words 'divine presence' came into his mind. But it was only a phrase. And it had a lofty sound. He was sure the Jews hadn't meant by God what you could only get from an ecstatic ~~idea~~ <sup>experience.</sup> ~~idea~~ It must have <sup>be</sup> its roots in an experience which came and went ~~quickly~~

quietly, and unawares, even day by day. He had a conviction that he'd overlooked this experience all his life, because it didn't fit <sup>in</sup> ~~with~~ the allowed concepts of <sup>with</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>out epoch.</sup> ~~time~~.

*ital*  
All of a sudden it seemed easy. Look at the way the room had appeared to him only a few moments ago, as being unsubstantial like dust! The silence had seemed to turn everything into one unity! He'd stood on the balcony and felt that everything was dust outside, joined together like one shadow, including even himself. And at the window on the landing, overlooking the garden, on his way upstairs, he'd felt he was actually breathing the stillness outside, and that the night was part of him! He'd felt no solitude!

*h.p.*  
~~He had at one time the feeling of there being one nature. But it was more than that.~~ There was a presence all round him, that actually seemed to breathe! The wind had touched his face when he'd gone out on to the balcony, like a breath from that presence, so intimate! And the presence was invisible, but always there. One could come and go, and forget it, but it would always be there. It would be there after he died, and it was there before he came. It included him. He had come out of it. And the presence was inside him as well. He was most aware of it when he felt peaceful. It was a presence he could violate, too.) ~~He would be violating something in himself.~~  
For instance, he hadn't wanted to switch the light on, from a sense that it would violate the silence. So there was harmony in the stillness. And it was possible to ruin this. If he'd talked or moved about noisily he would have ruined it for himself. The stillness would have become separate <sup>from</sup> ~~you~~ him. His thoughts would no longer have followed each other at their own pace, in their own order. For his thoughts seemed actually to come out of the stillness. They were quite different from those thoughts which he had deliberately---at the office,

*ital*

for instance... So there was a guide in the stillness, too, which you could follow or disregard, at will!

He thought back over it again, quietly. Surely there---only primitive, a mere beginning---was the form of 'God'? His sense of a presence all round him, breathing, surely that was his recognition of something alive and yet inside him, apart from him and yet the whole of life? Surely that was a fumbling towards a definition of God, that the Jews had been the first to make? One God for the whole universe---surely that was the feeling of things being a unity, with a presence behind it? The presence was invisible! It wasn't this tree or this touch of wind. These were only manifestations. So God was both invisible and intimate.

And it was a presence that lay before and after one's life, and continued while one was unaware of it. God was 'eternal'.

The presence included one's own life, too. One seemed to come out of it, and in death to be going back into it. This was the feeling of having been created. God was the 'creator'.

And yet the presence was inside one as well---it didn't simply include one. It was whole inside one. So God was to be found 'in secret'.

And if one followed the stillness one was aware of a harmony, in one's thoughts. That was where the Jews had made a moral connection. You could follow God at your own free will. You could consult Him, in secret. You could follow His guidance or not. What was this but Granville's feeling that the presence was in and all round him, with a pace and order of its own? What was it but the idea of 'eternal justice'? Only a man whose conscience was free could ~~commune with~~ <sup>talk to</sup> God, or have harmony!

God didn't take rewards, Moses had said. ~~He~~ <sup>God</sup> wasn't a man, or in

the image of a man, nor ~~was~~ was He any thing in our sense. He was 'spirit'. 'Of course,' thought Granville, 'how absurd it would be for me to ask the presence all round me to do something for me!' For the presence wasn't something he could see before him, or feel. It was underneath everything, the sense of there being some thing alive which wasn't limited to the things you could see and feel, ~~to be alive,~~ like the balcony or the palm-tree, <sup>though it was in them also.</sup> ~~How could you pray to that with your own interests?~~ It was pure spirit!

But those words 'pure spirit' had come to mean something ~~rather~~ lofty, ~~more than~~ like 'pure idea'. And he'd got to think through these words, and through the snares of the mind. He couldn't deny that when he stood in the silence he was aware of a force beyond him and yet in him! And men had given it a name. Surely 'God' <sup>was that name?</sup> had ~~the same form as his experience?~~


For the first time he saw a meaning in phrases that had always been empty for him---'God is spirit', 'the Creator', 'the God of peace', 'the God of Gods', 'the just God'. They could all be translated into his experience. Only <sup>those</sup> the words had been stripped bare of flesh, and he had to keep <sup>of a</sup> this experience <sup>in mind,</sup> 'presence' <sup>to make them real.</sup> To P 766(a)

~~But it was impossible to keep the experience in mind without a word of some sort! He thought of the word 'presence', <sup>for instance.</sup> That indicated the experience he'd just had. But yet the experience began and ended with himself, <sup>How could he talk to</sup> in that case. He couldn't talk to other people about 'the presence' and expect them to understand? <sup>Was that how the name 'God' had come into being - to give all such experiences, make them His own experience---he himself---wasn't big enough to have the same form as God.</sup> He couldn't really convey the nature of the experience until he got beyond himself as its platform. Or, in other words, he couldn't convey the magnitude of the being he'd come in contact with unless he showed it as more than an experience, indeed, as in a way beyond all experience. He had to convey the idea that while He'd been~~

falls

write in the shaded pencil which everybody understands! Yes we had for the experience!

But it was impossible for him to keep this experience in mind ~~without~~ without a word of some sort---without using that word 'presence'. But how could he talk to other people about 'the presence' and expect them to understand? Was that how the word God had come into being---to cover all such experiences and make then one shared concept for everybody? Only we had lost the experience: only the <sup>empty</sup> word remained to us!

And again, that word 'presence', ~~was~~ in covering only his own experience, didn't get beyond him, so that really it couldn't convey the magnitude of what he'd just come in contact with: he had to show that it was more than just a <sup>a</sup> passing experience, that it was in a way beyond all experience. He had to convey the idea that while he'd been 

To P. 767.

aware of a whole being---the 'presence'---yet it could never be experi-  
enced as a whole. Only a part or moment of it could be experienced---  
the darkness on the balcony, a glance from the window---and yet this  
part always suggested the whole. And the word 'presence' alone failed  
to convey this.

ital

He remembered, from Exodus, that before the flight from Egypt  
Moses had told his people the name of God for the first time. It was no  
longer 'Lord', meaning simply master, <sup>but Jehovah</sup> ~~And God spoke unto Moses, and~~  
~~said unto him, 'I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac,~~  
~~and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was~~  
~~not known to them.'~~ And Jehovah meant 'I am that I am'.

~~Surely that was much the same as saying 'Being'.~~  ~~Certainly it~~  
 ~~conveyed more than 'presence', which suggested only an experience that~~  
 ~~passed, a meeting.~~ 'I am that I am' gave the idea of an unswervable  
will, <sup>a</sup> complete <sup>being,</sup> ~~and~~ all that there was. It didn't bring in the spectator  
as 'presence' did.

n.p.

'But even then,' he thought, 'a word isn't enough in itself.'  ~~If he~~  
 ~~used the word 'Being' people wouldn't understand him any better than if~~  
 ~~he said presence.~~

J-ital

→ The fact was that he'd still be alone with his experience however  
many words he used.  ~~Surely that was the point.~~ <sup>But</sup> 'Jehovah' <sup>had been</sup>  ~~was~~ used  
by men living <sup>together,</sup>  ~~in the same communities~~ with the same hopes. <sup>And</sup> They  ~~all~~  
 ~~knew what it meant and they~~ passed it on to their children. In this  
way it was separate from each one of them in himself. Yet it was still  
intimate. So it <sup>had</sup>  ~~achieved~~ exactly that <sup>combined awe</sup>  ~~sense of vastness~~ and intimacy  
 ~~combined~~ which the thing itself, the <sup>'presence'</sup>  ~~Being~~, needed. And it did this  
only by being absorbed into the lives of men. Only by being shared  
among men could it be lifted beyond the limits of space and time to which  
one man alone,  ~~was tied.~~ That was the power of a word, as Moses saw.

e.c.

A word, like an idea, had to have a communal sanction before it could <sup>get</sup> grow strong, ~~and~~ before it could seem to have the detachment of the thing it described.

'So,' thought Granville, 'if my word 'presence' was used by people now, and it entered into their lives, and was passed on to children, it would take on power; it would carry a hint in its very sound of the kind of thing I experienced when the word came to my mind.'

And so it was with 'God'. It had to be known and felt from childhood. And if it wasn't, then knowledge of 'God' was accidental. One stumbled on it here and there through life, as he'd just done, To know 'God' you had to see him in the eyes of people round you, and hear him referred to day after day and connected with the smallest actions, drawn into the ~~very~~ flesh of life, not an idea, ~~at all~~, so that He always seemed to be at the edge of things and to be watching you. There was no difficulty in the knowledge itself, as Granville's experience of the 'presence' showed. But our community had no allowance for it. God had slipped out of life.

The word was certainly ~~empty~~ empty for him. It was ~~the~~ the same ~~as~~ as the pagan 'god', a ~~man~~ <sup>who</sup> ~~in~~ man in the sky, ~~throwing~~ <sup>who</sup> throwing thunderbolts or cast ~~a~~ a net round Venus and Mars while they made love; ridiculous or aesthetic, ~~and~~ always untrue. The word 'God' couldn't convey that dumb <sup>and</sup> ~~but~~ alive 'presence' he'd been aware of.

And this 'presence' was all he had. ~~He~~ <sup>It</sup> ~~hasn't~~ ~~grown~~ ~~up~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~godly~~ ~~world,~~ ~~he~~ ~~thought.~~ The 'presence' came and went, a mere lonely experience. It didn't affect anything. It lacked the warmth of something pointed out to <sup>him</sup> ~~one~~ in childhood. ~~There~~ ~~was~~ ~~no~~ ~~place~~ ~~for~~ ~~it.~~ ~~It~~ ~~was~~ ~~outside~~ ~~life~~ ~~even~~ ~~as~~ ~~he~~ ~~saw~~ ~~it,~~ ~~too?~~ The eclipse had been an event in empty space for him, like the click of a machine.

n.p.

He couldn't help it. He would always see it like that. His feelings were separate from the event. There were his feelings, then the weather, then the eclipse, all separate, never in the unity he was sometimes aware of in life underneath---to be touched so easily, it ~~always~~ seemed! Abu Kath'm had seen God. But for his world that was 'mystical', meaning strange and hidden, not belonging to the light of day or shared by other people.

Now even the word 'presence' was becoming empty for him. It was an idea floating in his mind, because he'd got used to the word now. It was private. It had no echoes beyond him. Yes, you had to see it in other men's eyes. Alone you weren't enough.

The room looked ordinary again, and the silence outside seemed familiar now, an accompaniment to his thoughts, no longer suggesting a 'presence'. He began to feel tired. But he was determined to get to the end of his thoughts. He heard Pinkie cough from next door in her sleep. It occurred to him that there'd be a heavy day at the office---some files were coming in from Kirkuk. But a question persisted in his mind: how had a person like himself come about, perceiving the sky without anything divine in it, without 'God'? ~~actually perceiving it like that?~~ Because it wasn't the truth. ~~It wasn't the truth about the sky, about the presence of~~ <sup>real</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~was mysterious and seemed to breathe!~~ ~~in the silence~~

ital He saw the sky as a kind of mathematical concept---yes, but what did that mean? It meant he saw it as something useful to men: that is, men could measure it and predict its movements!

The eclipse was a kind of geometrical action for him: an Object called the moon moved between an Object called the sun and another Object on which he was standing. A dimming of light resulted, ~~measurable and~~ lasting <sup>so</sup> ~~so~~ many seconds. He saw it like a surveyor from another universe. Yet he hadn't the slightest knowledge of surveying or physics! It was simply in his nature!

Ask any ordinary man and he'd give you the same geometrical story of what was 'happening' in the eclipse. It wasn't that this kind of thinking was new or unusual, but that in us it was more than thinking---it was actually the way we smelt and touched

- that sky  
he saw!

and saw things!

It was unreligious thinking. But why? Well, it laid down the nature of the sky as something that could be measured and predicted: there was nothing in the sky that couldn't be tackled by men's minds; it was only oxygen, light, matter, only objects in space.

Everything beyond men's minds escaped him! Yet the world was full of it: men's minds were only a slight little tracing on this huge eternity. Yet he'd been brought up to say it was the whole thing! As a child he'd always imagined there was a policeman in the sky who controlled everything: not a god but a man, in a blue uniform, with a truncheon. And at the same time this created a terrible puzzlement because the policeman wasn't all that reliable. He had allowed a war to happen, for instance, which nobody could see the reason for afterwards.

What else was that but perceiving the world as if it had been made only for men's ambitions? All of a sudden he saw a connecting link---<sup>this kind of mind</sup> came from a terrific act of pride, from wanting to turn the whole of reality into something you could manoeuvre and use, just as if you were the author of <sup>it all!</sup> the whole of things. It reminded him of that railway bridge, in Sussex, when he'd gazed down at the gleaming tracks below and realised that all the facts he'd learned at school were dead facts, because they illuminated a thing only in so far as it could be used for some purpose; it was useful to know about expanding metals if you were laying those tracks. But it wasn't the whole truth! ~~of reality~~ ~~it was not the whole~~ You had to strike ~~the~~ the world dead first, in your mind, ~~in order~~ to see its function, like something mathematical, ~~was~~ apart from yourself. And instead of just keeping that as one of our methods of thinking---though a strange and disquieting one---we had let it cloud over our whole consciousness until there were people like---himself!---people who saw the world naturally like that! He saw it with all the heart and breath and enormous mystical movement knocked out <sup>of it!</sup> Yes, all that invisible movement, all <sup>that</sup> ~~was~~ 'presence' round him, had to be called 'mystical'---a little cranky!

And to realise this he'd had to ~~submit his whole self and will~~

*ital*

allow his whole self and will to be engulfed by something huge and apparently selfless outside him, first in Sussex, when he'd really seen the country for the first time, and now in Basrah. 'Islam' meant 'surrender': he'd surrendered to something both times, he'd been sucked in by the outer presence---he remembered that walk along the road to Chichester when he could hardly tell the difference between his body and what lay all round him in the massive heat. And wasn't that what Moses had told the tribes in the desert---to submit? Wasn't that the first law of all real religion---submit and surrender not to other men but to ~~that~~ *that the* 'presence': listen to it, at night...?

And this meant forgetting your ambitions. 'You' were forgotten---only this huge will outside remained, flooding through you!

*ital*

Christ had to say it again---he came fifteen hundred years after Moses. Again there were ambitions in the air---the God of the Jews was waiting to conquer all the world for Israel. And Christ began the conquering in his <sup>own</sup> way, through a total submission of self that nobody else understood. He ~~was~~ seemed to waver in the garden, the night before he was ~~was~~ taken: no one understood what he was about to do, he was absolutely alone---on the face of it, he would just die and not be heard of again; 'O, my Father', he said, 'if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' ~~That was the submission~~ *As the big will outside willed!*

While people had ambitions in their minds they were cut off from the truth---that was what Moses and Christ seemed to say! The little personal will stopped the big outer will from flowing through them. So both Moses and Christ had to lift God up above men again---away from their ambitions---from their itch for rewards!

'Is our role now,' Granville thought, 'the same, to lift the sky up beyond men again?'

That was the meaning of Christ's death: people were shown that at least one man could give up all his ambitions and go willingly into death.

That was why the story held, because it was a standing testimonial from generation to generation of the power of the human creature.

Christ left no rules ~~for~~ for us. Only this silence after his death! But was that also a sign---that we had to look further and further into the silence until we found our feet? Was this what history had been doing? 'Is this my interest in history?' Granville asked himself. 'To find the traces of that theme?'

The moment the God of Moses was mixed up in <sup>ambitions</sup>---the moment temples were put up <sup>to Him</sup> and a high priest elected, the moment ~~a society~~ <sup>started</sup> round it---there was danger. The moment Christ was caught up in a church, in ambition and office and competition, there was danger. Their truth was smashed. Little personal wills got in the way. ~~And that had happened.~~ We had churches. But not a religious soul in the Christian world! Nobody could be religious! Nobody had it in him! He hadn't got it in his nerves, in his mind, in his heart, in his nose or bowels or belly! All you could do was make a little gesture---strive---try to fight your way through! But the churches ~~are~~ <sup>were</sup> just muck. They ~~are~~ <sup>were</sup> little reminders of what men used to be. ~~They are~~ <sup>were</sup> like the ruins of temples! But ~~more~~ <sup>couldn't</sup> more than that they ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> only little clubs. The Christian ~~can't~~ <sup>couldn't</sup> believe in God. Christ and God ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> been smashed to pieces. We ~~can~~ <sup>could</sup> only grub in the ruins and pick up little morsels of the marvellous coloured stone and try to piece the world together again so that real dawn <sup>would</sup> rise on our children's children's children... ~~If a man tells you he~~

a society

it's

~~believes in God,' thought Granville, 'he's a liar or a fool or a swine.' The Christian was crippled and broken and babbling like an idiot, and God had almost totally disowned him, the link was only there by the thinnest umbilical cords. Could one of the idiots suddenly stop grubbing in the dust and garbage and lift his eyes up to the sky---eyes that shone with self <sup>like those</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~all~~ <sup>even in the sky</sup> ~~morons~~ saw nothing but self <sup>wherever they looked</sup> and say 'I see God? 'I believe in God?'~~

If a man tells you he believes in God, thought Granville, he's a liar or a fool or a swine!

Perhaps only the middle ages had been really in the image of Christ. Then, ambitions had been really dead for a time. The old idiot-show of the ancient Roman world, with its endless armies and its putrid works of art and its sewers and straight roads, was finished for a time. And so they were 'middle' ages for us---~~after the 'dark' ages when the old empire was~~

~~collapsing, and before~~ after the Roman empire, which we understood, and before the renaissance in Italy, which we <sup>also</sup> understood: between two spectacular worlds, the Roman and our own! [Were they called 'middle' because they were all uncertainty from our point of view? Was it that we couldn't read out <sup>our</sup> own ambitions in them? Nothing had happened in that time from our point of view! Just as, for our world now, Abu Kath'm hadn't seen the real eclipse! [We looked in the middle ages for our own plans and charters and personalities and continual fretting struggles between little personal wills from epoch to epoch, and didn't find them. No trade, as in our world, or very little of it! ~~Each domain just produced for itself, and the devil take their neighbours.~~ No great landowners with their armies of slaves, ~~as in the ancient world - the nobles in the 'middle' ages were soldiers, living modestly.~~ No ambitious ruling class! But one great ambitious project there ~~was~~ <sup>had been</sup> that held everything else together: the second coming of Christ.

Well, you could see the germ of trouble there, already. People would wait so long and no longer. Gradually the old ambitious itch ~~had~~ started again. The first sign was a revival of trade. Gradually the towns became important again. Certain people had grown tired of waiting! The 'burghers'---the men of the towns---were the seed of the new world that came into being. They planned life, they always had done: they planned the education, the law, the drainage. Their trade brought movement. They looked ahead. They brought refinement. That peculiar under-stillness of the middle ages, that patient waiting mood, came to an end.

There were long connecting roads again, new ship routes. Venice was typical of the new world, an independent republic based on trade, not faith! It sent its ships to infidel ports without a bad conscience.

Then ancient learning was revived. No sign like the cross had governed the ancient world! There'd been heroism---fabulous stories, not the bitter stories of the saints, always waiting for second life! Men had seemed to stand their full height in the pagan world---tragic figures! Men had even populated the sky, as gods! Happiness had been a reasonable design, even if the gods farted at you sometimes!

So this renaissance was a revival of life as a grand, enjoyable adventure! There were great voyages of discovery. The nobles were again cultivated people living in the towns---not <sup>just</sup> soldiers as they'd been in the middle ages. Fortunes were made, courts sprang up everywhere, there were tyrants, strange whirling careers that went out like a star.

But it wasn't just a repetition of the ancient world. In a way, this new world came from Christ. That was the contradiction! The will and stature he'd given men by saying they were the children of God, and therefore free, <sup>was</sup> ~~not~~ precisely the energy behind the renaissance. It looked like a repetition because of its spectacular movement, but there was now a different morality from which people acted, there was a new dignity, there was the sense of one order governing everything. The old chaos of the ancient Roman world wasn't there---no haphazard myths and cults and weird 'mysteries'. Theories of an ordered universe started, a universe governed by laws, and all of life was now searched for its consistent principles and themes, even the <sup>human</sup> body.

And the same thing went on in the church. By the end of the middle ages the church was as much a vehicle for personal ambition as the ancient Roman governments had been. The first real challenge to this was the reformation <sup>in Germany</sup>. Again this was from Christ. Again, like the renaissance, it aimed to lift men up.

It denied that the pope had any mysterious access to God. Confession ought to be abolished, it said. This meant that the church wouldn't be able to absolve a man of his sins---even for

money, as it had been doing. Only the man himself could do it, in his own conscience.

Both the renaissance and the reformation, without meaning to, achieved a kind of secular society in which Christ and God were separated from life. These words fell away from the lips of the poor, gradually. Men had been lifted up so high---the renaissance made him shine with intelligence, and seem to conquer all of reality, ~~the~~ the reformation made him a priest to himself---that nothing else beyond them could be seen!

This took away the church's hold on people---the hold of fear and interest. It took away the intimate hold, the consoling guidance in little things.

So the two movements had the same effect. A society came into being that went round like clockwork, serving nothing but itself, not referring to anything beyond it. The sky became like an empty ceiling over it---just space---oblivion.

~~But life had been exhausted~~  
 But people's behaviour wasn't the same as in ancient times. There was nothing like the greed and chaos of the old empire, in its last years. Christ seemed to have entered life, but anonymously, in people's behaviour. There was a new kind of social order. There were fewer, and fewer, slaves, fewer serfs. Women were no longer servants. That breath of freedom from Christ had come into life. There was the idea of the dutiful citizen, more and more, especially in the north, where the reformation had happened. Every man was more and more responsible for himself. But Christ was less and less recognised as the author. Society was 'Christian', but the name Christ began to fall away. Men chose their own lives. 'Democracy'---demos-kratia, the power of men, above everything else.

'And so I see the eclipse as described by men,' he said to himself, 'in a universe spanned by men's measurements and calculations. I see it only inside men's capacities. And everything beyond a man's mind secedes me! I have no words for it. Only when I look into Abu Kath'm's eyes do I see it; and realise how little open to the real world I am!'

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'If I withdraw from something and watch <sup>it,</sup> he asked himself, 'what is the activity uppermost in me? Surely the brain? And so, naturally, if I'm in withdrawal from things---from people---even from myself---my uppermost activity is in the brain: I see things from the brain, they sky like an empty proposition!

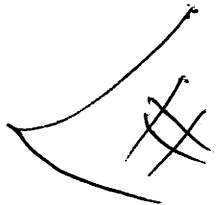
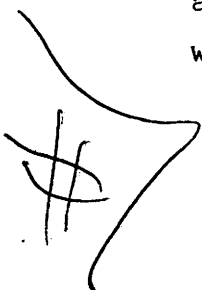
'This is perhaps what I noticed first in Abu Kath'm, that she isn't in withdrawal.'

He remembered how once he'd said to her jokingly one morning, "You're getting fat!", and she'd looked down at her self, at her flowing robes, with such a funny expression, so mixed and puzzled: she really never had thought about herself before, in that way, it seemed; she hadn't thought about her body, ~~namely, flesh separated from the rest of her~~. The division of 'mind' from 'body' didn't exist for her. That was his distinction! That was the Christian world!

Really his remark tore her out of God's world, where she ~~was never~~ ~~never~~ quite distinct from everything round her, and <sup>it</sup> suddenly pitched her into a men's world, where she was a 'person', where she stood alone, surveying her own body from above.

She never could attain to a 'personality' in our sense. She never could survey the world and herself as if she had really arranged it all, planning it as she went along! She had submitted, she was submitted, in all her being, she could be nothing else. She was blind. She had no plans for the day, for the next hour---the will of Allah created her rhythm.

She felt it was unlucky if someone asked after the health of her children. She made a quick little prayer to ward off the evil eye. All the common people of Basrah <sup>did</sup> ~~were~~ ~~like~~ that. All the ancient Mediterranean peoples, the Greeks included, ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~been~~ <sup>done it</sup> ~~like that~~ <sup>once</sup>, too. One mustn't pry too closely into life. There was a spell that mustn't be broken. Too much attention shouldn't be drawn to men, Indeed, the mind altogether was unlucky.



The dawn began to come through, an ever so faint blueness at the corner of the sky, making the rush carpet and the door to the balcony softly clear. And almost to the moment there was the sound of birds. Their singing seemed to be inside the air, waking with it, in no particular place. How restful the twattering was, with all the time of the universe at its disposal! The birds actually seemed to wake with the sky. And men were non-existent. How lovely freedom was!

Horror of the mind was in him, too---from Abbott's Road. That was why Abu Kath'm had stirred so much thought in him. It was really a horror of men---a horror of them dominating everything, shutting out the light. ~~A love of the god in man~~

His thoughts came drowsily, hardly connected any more: dim but with a peaceful clarity underneath, hardly words any more, disjointed and brief.

In Abbott's Road, too, life had been blind, like Abu Kath'm. 'They'---the absent power---had controlled everything. 'They' came and collected the rent. 'They' made wars. 'They' made you work. Movement always came from outside. ~~Outside~~ Outside was the will of men---invisible men who arranged the schedule: not the will of Allah.

Even then the intimate little fabric of life was hardly touched---the winding of the clock, pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, the walk in the park on Sunday afternoons. It was woven together again at once.

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*His thoughts came dimly, hardly connected any more: all in all with a peace of clarity underneath, hardly words any more, dignified and brief*

~~The dawn began to come through, an ever so faint blueness at the corner of the sky, making the rush carpet and the door to the balcony softly clear. And almost to the moment there was the sound of birds. Their singing seemed to be inside the air, waking with it, in no particular place. How restful the twittering was, with all the time of the universe at its disposal! The birds actually seemed to wake with the sky. And men were non-existent. How lovely freedom was!~~

Horror of the mind was in him, too---from Abbott's Road. That was why Abu Kath'm had stirred so much thought in him. ~~He had recognised something in her~~ It was really a horror of men---a horror of them dominating everything.

In Abbott's Road, too, <sup>life had been blind like Abu Kath'm's</sup> ~~one had had no plans.~~ 'They'---the absent power---<sup>had</sup> controlled everything. 'They' came and collected the rent. 'They' made <sup>was</sup> a ~~hash~~ <sup>'They' made you work</sup> of government. Movement <sup>always</sup> came from outside <sup>in wars</sup> or strikes or higher wages. Even then the <sup>intimate</sup> little fabric <sup>of life</sup> was hardly touched---the winding of the clock, pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, the ~~walk in the park on Sunday afternoons.~~ It was woven together again at ~~once~~

Of course, there wasn't Abu Kath'm's stateliness in ~~the~~ Abbott's Road world. Nobody walked like her. That had gone out. Life had a troublesome edge. There were chill things: at the end of life was oblivion, like the grey sky on a bad morning, eternally. Nobody explained it. Suddenly there might be a cream-coloured ambulance in the street. Or blinds might be pulled down. There was a sense of disaster. Death was unexplained. Just a ~~frightful oddity~~.

And there was no slow awakening to the world like the birds. A hard routine had been fixed on every day. One couldn't say where it came from, and one didn't do it for <sup>oneself</sup> ~~one's own interests~~. It was just there, a <sup>you</sup> jerking motion ~~one~~ had to join <sup>because there was nothing else.</sup> ~~rather apart from one.~~

Life wasn't natural <sup>here.</sup> The face grew fixed, too, with set lips and unmoving eyes. The words became clipped. One's walk was jerky, too.

But even then, despite the plan that was fixed by somebody else, the little fabric was kept. People held stiffly away from each other. <sup>Their lives were.</sup> ~~One's life~~ <sup>Key</sup> was arranged and ~~moved~~ by men ~~one~~ didn't see. But still the fabric was untouched.

And Christ and God had gone into this fabric, it seemed. The church was just a building in Abbott's Road, but there was a decency between people, and a quiet belief. The Christian dignity was there. But the word 'Christ' itself was only a swear-word.

~~He remembered one Monday afternoon in his early childhood, when he was sitting on his mother's knee, after she'd hung the clothes out on the line. He <sup>remembered</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>ing</sup> gazed down at the narrow gardens, where sheets were billowing in the sunshine, and ~~he~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>the</sup> impression of a peaceful centre in life. It was difficult to explain. But it came from his mother. It was the feeling of there being one <sup>marvellous</sup> ~~theme~~ <sup>that this was glimpse of the very centre</sup> ~~in life that~~, included the sunshine, the silence, the wind making the sheets billow, and ~~the~~ <sup>two of them,</sup> ~~themselves,~~ gazing beyond each other but joined together.~~

~~People in Abbott's Road weren't able to conceive Christ and God openly as they'd once done in the villages. Beyond the roof-tops was oblivion. No questions were asked. There was only a plan of work made by men. That had to be fulfilled. One had no other meaning. So one couldn't lift up one's head to the sky, or to Christ or God, [as one had in the villages.] One no longer had the right. There was only the plan of work. But even then a glow was kept.~~

The plans always came from above. Of course---those movements of history he'd read about, the revival of commerce, the renaissance, the reformation, the industrial revolution, ~~in England,~~ they were all ~~from above.~~ That was why there were only books to go by, ~~nothing~~

He remembered one Monday afternoon in his early childhood, when he was sitting on his mother's knee, after she'd hung the clothes out on the line. He remembered gazing down at the narrow gardens where sheets were billowing in the sunshine, and having the impression that this was a glimpse of the very centre of life, which was a place of peace. It was difficult to explain. But it seemed to come from his mother, to be passed on to him like speech. It was the sense of there being one marvellous theme that ran through all life and included the sunshine, the silence, the wind making the sheets billow, and the two of them sitting there and gazing far beyond each other, while ~~also~~ joined together.

Beyond the roof-tops in Abbott's Road there was oblivion. No questions were asked. There was only a plan of work made by men. That had to be fulfilled. There was no other meaning.

So you couldn't lift up your head to the sky, or to Christ or God. You no longer had the right. There was only the plan of work. But even then a glow was kept.

The plans always came from above. Of course---those movements of history he'd just been thinking about, the revival of commerce, the renaissance, the reformation, the industrial revolution, they were all from above! That was why there were only books to go by---nothing was passed from mouth to mouth about them.

Top. 783

passed from mouth to mouth. And for all he knew the books might be wrong! } Most people had simply stayed where they were, until the wind blew from above blew too hard.

He'd asked himself if a life without ambitions was possible. Yet he'd known the answer already! It lay in himself—in his childhood. Yet he had to go through books to find out.

Sometimes people <sup>had</sup> worked in fields, sometimes in cities, sometimes for one man, sometimes for several, sometimes for the state---in the name of God, <sup>or</sup> in the name of humanity! But it was only a wind that passed. Life remained substantially the same, with the same peace.

Otherwise who would have done the work? You can't work running round all the time.

His father loved the dawn. Every morning he went round the tiny garden, just after the light came: Even the houses of Abbott's Road looked natural at dawn, like hills.

And at King George's dock his father could keep his dream, ~~that~~ ~~they~~ they couldn't take away the vast river gleaming in the early light, and the sound of fog-horns!

Unless a man had a light in his eyes---of something beyond all men---he was horrible! ~~He was horrible!~~

'How horrible to grow up among burghers!' he thought. What suffering that must be for the children! He remembered something lovely from before the War: it was when he'd seen the old Queen pass in her carriage and a woman next to him had said to her child, lifting him up, over the heads of the crowd, "There she is, duck! Look, there's the Queen!" And the boy had gazed before him, his mouth open, absolutely rapt, gazing, it seemed, into everything fabulous that there was in the world! It was lovely how a dream could be passed on like that!

He felt satisfied now. His life had joined together. That was ~~why~~

why he'd set out on these thoughts, perhaps---to join his life together. He could face men better now, he thought. He had his own world.

A clock struck in the distance, but he couldn't make out the number <sup>of strokes.</sup> He felt sleepy for the first time, and began to nod. Would a godly earth come back again? he wondered drowsily. As he thought this he opened his eyes again and looked across at the window, and saw a long curling leaf of the palm-tree silhouetted against the sky like a finger, pointing upwards.

BOOK IIIChapter<sup>12.</sup>

People started calling at the house again, and a group even began to form, with the house as its centre. Glenning, the publicity-man, was almost a daily visitor now. Some of the other faces he'd seen that first evening re-appeared; there was the young girl Dick Pollocke had been talking to; her name was Lucy, and she always came ~~to the house~~ with a girl-friend nick-named 'Ginger'. The two of them sat in the music-room together, long-haired and quiet, sometimes with a book, sometimes just sitting in silence. And he himself came and went casually. It was quite pleasant. The young man called 'erald with the agreeable smile also came sometimes: the plastics-firm he worked for was not many yards from the TIM place, and often he and Pollocke walked over together.

~~He saw how absurd he'd been to accuse himself of having frightened her guests away; equally absurd, he began to think, might be his suspicions about her. However, Grove was the one person who didn't come to the house. But he saw no signs in people's faces of <sup>concealed</sup> hidden knowledge; they were friendly to him in exactly the same easy fashion as they were to Pinkie. He grew ashamed of his outburst with her when he'd pushed the coffee-pot off the table; he decided to be quieter in future, and to remember that, while he had time to brood all day, Pinkie was hard at work in Wembley. But also it occurred to him that perhaps~~

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~~their visitors didn't see anything amiss in her having an affair. Nor, he noticed, did the name 'Grove' figure in any of their conversations. On the other hand, they might not feel the need to mention him. Had he heard Hanni use the name? Or had it been 'stove'?~~

For some time there ~~had been~~ <sup>were</sup> repeated phone-calls in the day which came to nothing when he answered them. He would pick up the receiver and say "Hullo", then there would be silence, followed by a slight click at the other end. It got on his nerves and the idea became fixed in his mind that it was Grove trying to get through to Pinkie, though why Grove didn't know she worked in Wembley he couldn't explain. One day he shouted into the silent phone, trembling, "Stop it, you bloody fool, stop it!" He remembered afterwards how his voice had echoed up the well of the stairs in the empty house, like someone else's voice, rasping and strange; it sounded like someone <sup>bound and gagged.</sup> ~~stranded, very~~ ~~much alone.~~

He heard nothing more of the offer of the Beirut office, which Glenning had told him as more or less a certainty. Clearly it wouldn't happen before he went back again. In a way that was a relief: he would be in the office again with Mohammed at his desk on the other side of the room, with the fans whirring and sunlight streaming between the shutters; it was quite a happy image, and it seemed to him that he could actually hear the silence of that office, with its special tone, as if the sunlight was pressing on the roofs outside, like a huge brass weight that came down harder and harder as the day went on; and behind the silence there was always the cacophony of car-hooters from the main street, in the distance. He ought to be getting his ticket back and wondered whether to shorten his leave by a week and take a boat all the way instead of flying: the voyage would calm him again. He noticed that he already assumed Pinkie wouldn't be coming. But he told himself <sup>that</sup> she would follow him after a month or so.

h.p. ~~Yet he was calm enough, really. Only there was a tussle of nerves going on inside him that stopped him sleeping at times; it went on in an undertone, almost pleasurable.~~ [Pinkie came and went from the office. Several weeks ~~was~~ passed without a single new event. But though he thought of going to a travel-bureau and getting his ticket it didn't seem quite serious. He couldn't imagine going back. Usually if something was certain to happen he could feel it in some way, and imagine the circumstances.

Sometimes several of them went together to a new café in <sup>the</sup> Commercial Road where there were wicker-baskets on the walls for flowers, and a fisher's net draped across the ceiling in a chic manner. Pinkie was subdued as he'd never seen her before, but still with the intact look that aroused his curiosity. She gave way to all his suggestions. They went shopping together, and otherwise she seemed quite content to stay in. He put it down to their getting a good many visitors. The door downstairs was open most of the day, as she liked it. He took walks by Wapping docks and the Tower, and went to concerts quite frequently. Or he would stroll down to the Shoreditch library and get out a few travel books. The house was tidy again and the mild weather held. He began to wonder how he would leave this light, clean life, with the pleasurable undertone of menace, in so short a time. ~~He began to remember how cheerful their life had been two years before, with people coming and going all day, as they were doing now. Perhaps Basrah had <sup>got</sup> him in a dark frame of mind, making him forget their former life together, how good it had been sometimes. And he had arrived, that first evening, with his dark Basrah-self, expecting all sorts of doom! He must learn that perhaps life was less dramatic here.~~

There was a lot of coffee-drinking in the kitchen, and he enjoyed it in a mild way, especially the long hours talking to Hanni sometimes, when she felt in a confidential mood. But it was a vacuum. ~~There was~~

~~a lot of pleasantries, but~~ underneath, it was all frightful. Yet <sup>his</sup> ~~one's~~ face mustn't acknowledge this. Nor must <sup>his</sup> ~~one's~~ talk. Hex was the same as the others, keeping his real self in reserve: it was the polite thing to do ~~after all~~.

n.p. He asked Pinkie one evening, "I feel frightened sometimes---is everything all right?" [ Her coming and going <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ so mechanical! She made a customary stiff blink of her eyes, with a loose gaze for a moment; and she said, "What do you mean, Pip?", in the same surprised and slightly breathless tone as when he'd asked his question about 'affairs' <sup>that</sup> ~~the~~ first evening. [ He gave it up. One had to be sure of one's facts. ~~Confronting her with these facts would be like issuing minutes to someone in a government office. 'Facts' meant what could be verified objectively by quoting sight, sound, report---rather on a scientific level. Otherwise, if he spoke of possibilities only, and silent fears, and all the timid hopes that passed through his mind unattended, she---the government official---could look blank and deny knowledge. That was how intimacy fared in this world!~~

h.p.

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Hanni got furious at one of Dick's escapades. ~~Granville discovered,~~  
~~with admiration, what the fellow's secret life was like.~~ <sup>Was there a way</sup>  
~~out here for himself?~~ <sup>she</sup> But he hadn't the initiative! Hanni had come to  
stay the night with Pinkie, rather than go back to Hampton Court, and she'd  
rung up Dick at the office to say so. "Oh, I'm sorry about that, darling,"  
<sup>Dick</sup> he said over the phone, "go to bed early and get a night's rest. Your  
eyes are beginning to show the strain." The three of them, Pinkie, Hanni  
and Granville, were sitting in the kitchen drinking wine after dinner  
when she suddenly laid down her glass and said, "I'm going to Hampton  
Court, and I think I'm going to find something interesting when I get down  
there." They laughed and told her not to be a fool, but she got her hand-  
bag at once and left the house. And next evening she called in and told  
them what she'd found. She walked into the flat, she said, and found it  
in darkness but knew he was there because she could smell the Turkish  
cigarettes he smoked when he <sup>was seducing</sup> ~~wanted~~ a woman. She pushed open the door  
of the front room and switched on the light, and there was Dick with a  
stunning and 'Juno-esque' girl, sitting on a sofa in front of the 'view',  
with the window open at the bottom. He'd just undone her blouse and  
had slipped <sup>off her shoulders</sup> ~~off~~ her petticoat-<sup>straps</sup> so that her breasts were <sup>showing</sup> ~~bare~~. He  
was just about to bend down and kiss one of her nipples when she put the  
light on, she said. The girl quite calmly pulled her straps up again  
and closed her blouse, and said, hardly turning round, "What unexpected  
guest have we got?" Dick looked terrified and said, "It's my wife!  
Won't you meet?" He got up and was just about to make the introductions---  
Hanni said she was glad to find his fly-buttons <sup>which he had interfered with</sup> ~~at~~ any rate---  
when she walked <sup>towards them</sup> ~~forward~~ in a fury and <sup>shouted at</sup> ~~said to~~ the girl, "Get out of my  
flat at once!" The girl <sup>got up</sup> ~~got up~~ with a haughty expression---she really was  
magnificent, and Hanni felt a little twinge of admiration for <sup>her</sup> ~~Dick~~---and  
said in a casual way, "Oh, <sup>Yes, of course!</sup> ~~are you in such a hurry?~~ I expect you want

were done  
up, L

a little word with your husband, don't by you?" After she'd gone Hanni began more or less chasing him round the flat. She filled a huge flower-bowl with water and calmly tipped the lot over his head <sup>when he'd thought</sup> ~~the worst was past~~. He was absolutely drenched, and while he was trying to wipe himself off she <sup>started</sup> began slapping him round the face at a furious rate. As he said afterwards, she was really hitting the girl--- ~~that was~~ <sup>which</sup> what really stung her, and her <sup>id</sup> accepted the blows on this basis, ~~seeing~~ <sup>made her seem lighter!</sup> ~~that the girl wasn't there!~~ He looked blue next day, and had a slight cut <sup>on</sup> by his upper lip. By five o'clock in the morning they'd talked themselves out and then had the 'most enormous screw' ever. Hanni said it was wonderful dealing with a man after he'd been caught in flagrante delectis ---you could kick him, pour water over him and 'really go to town' as you never could otherwise; <sup>then you could really 'milk' him.</sup> For several days afterwards she was mute and narrow-eyed, and would answer none of Dick's questions. He gave her flowers and took her to the theatre, but she couldn't forget how <sup>magnificent</sup> the girl had <sup>been</sup> ~~spoken to her~~.

Granville thought he felt a glow of admiration for Dick.) ~~XXXXXX~~ But mostly it was envy. He told himself that Dick was asserting the only freedom left in life. The spell of the flesh! That was the only thing left! So he went to the office and found Dick just coming out of a board meeting. "What a wonderful fellow you are!" he said with the frivolous, sparkling glance which was now taken for granted between them, and which he really thought idiotic. And then, while Dick was smiling back at him, with the same little sparkle, he realised that he didn't know why he'd come to the office, that he hadn't wanted to, that he didn't belong here, that he didn't know what had happened to his life, that he was whirling round giddily in other people's lives which they had made! So he promptly made up a reason for coming---he wanted to look up the contracts department (ah, yes!---another little twinkle---after more money, eh?) and dashed out of the building.

Why did he <sup>find</sup> ~~love~~ a woman?

Through  
 e.c. Loyalty to Pinkie! And <sup>she</sup> ~~Pinkie~~ was probably with Grove, at this minute!  
 But he refused this <sup>thought</sup> at once, with old habit. Yet she probably was!  
 But suppose she wasn't? He faltered again. And <sup>so</sup> his resolution failed  
 him, which it didn't do in Dick. He didn't have Dick's pluck to enter  
 the mystery and risk everything with his <sup>own</sup> hands and his own life. He was  
 always hanging back in thought! ~~Pinkie would do everything for him~~  
 If a separation came about ~~she would achieve~~ <sup>she would</sup> and then ~~he would change~~  
 his life! He told Dick that Hanni had 'spilled the beans', and how she'd  
 described the girl as Junoesque. And Dick smiled, then told him what a  
 beating he'd taken. "Still," he added, "I felt as fit as a fiddle next  
 day. It was rather like a massage followed by a cold shower."

One evening <sup>the day</sup> ~~Dick gave him~~ <sup>Dick gave him</sup> one of his little speeches about sex. "You know, I'm  
 quite a methodical person, but by God there's no method as far as sex is  
 concerned, is there? You can't book it in advance, can you? I'd say  
~~I~~ <sup>I</sup> really wanted sex about, well, once a week, not more---I mean the  
 real McCoy, not titillation and <sup>all</sup> that <sup>caper!</sup> sort of thing. Not often for a  
 thriving male, is it? But I bet Don Juan didn't do much better, for all  
 his escapades!" He added, "One of our clients from South America had  
 some sort of aphrodisiac powder, from a root or something, which he said  
 made you red-hot. We had him down to Hampton Court to stay, then I came  
 back one night and found he'd been putting the stuff in Hanni's tea!"  
 Granville laughed. "What happened?"

"Well, of course, I told him to leave the house and never darken  
 my towels again!"

As time went on Pinkie became more and more matter-of-fact. It  
 seemed to be the result of working at the office. She was tired when  
 she came back, and anything too personal, any <sup>intimate</sup> discussion of their life,  
~~together, was distant if not~~ <sup>seemed</sup> absurd <sup>to</sup> for her, <sup>perhaps</sup> because it was outside the  
 working schedule <sup>of the day</sup>. He tried to summon up ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> courage to ask  
 about Grove, but ~~as always couldn't~~ <sup>didn't</sup> for fear of getting an honest answer."

Nothing that wasn't about a clear practical matter, such as who would get tomorrow's shopping in, was admissible. The office side made the rest of life seem soft. <sup>settled;</sup> Her reactions with other people were waiting for her, <sup>settled;</sup> at the office; she had to make no effort for them, ~~and~~ they were enough to fill the day, <sup>and</sup> she had had enough of people by the time she got home and didn't want more exposition <sup>and</sup> ~~or more~~ argument from Granville. ~~And~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~He,~~ on <sup>the</sup> ~~whole,~~ had passed the day alone, and waited for her with a certain excitement. She didn't have to be a vivid person for her relationships at the office; ~~and~~ so her eyes looked dimmer than he'd seen them before, and all her extravagance seemed to have gone. She was unaware of this.

He lost faith in his thoughts. To think he'd once had the feeling of a mission! What was he doing for other people? What was he doing to alleviate anybody else's suffering? He sat alone in a room! Without being a teacher or official or priest or anything of that kind, he expected the world to be changed, too. ~~This collapse was due mostly to the fact that the other three were at work all day.~~ He saw them in the evening when they were a little jaded. <sup>And</sup> It made him feel ineffectual. [But what were they doing to change the world?] ~~Although he asked himself this question it made no difference.~~ Why did he have to accuse himself so much? He told himself he was home on leave---it would soon be up---but the sense of being ineffectual whenever he went into his room abided. At the office, where he'd be doing no more for the world in <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ sense, <sup>than now</sup> his conscience would be clear. He could see it in Pinkie. Her conscience was clear, <sup>was</sup> ~~but it seemed to be bought out~~ <sup>— indemnified —</sup> each day, afresh, when she went to the office.

He made her breakfast <sup>every morning,</sup> ~~as always,~~ and usually prepared dinner when she came back at night. She was <sup>by business</sup> ~~usually~~ kept out <sup>on</sup> Fridays until midnight or so. She said <sup>Friday</sup> ~~this~~ was the night when the difference departments at Nigel's firm got together, first in a committee-meeting and then over dinner. <sup>But</sup> He phoned her once during this committee-meeting, in the early part of the evening, <sup>and</sup> ~~but~~ there was no reply; ~~also~~ she said afterwards

Q  
e.c.

Q

Q  
e.c.  
h.p.  
if/els

h.p.

e.c.

that this was because the secretaries had gone home, <sup>adding</sup> ~~She added~~ that  
 a matter of fact she'd see in the light flickering on the operator's  
 switchboard as she passed, <sup>But he didn't believe it.</sup> ~~that was probably him.~~ One week-end she  
 went off to Nigel's house in Wiltshire ~~fourth week-end~~ and came back look-  
 ing pale and more tired than <sup>before.</sup> ~~when she went.~~ He dared not ask her why this  
 was so because it might indicate that he suspected <sup>her</sup> / of not actually going,  
 but <sup>spending two days in bed with</sup> ~~staying in town with Grove!~~ <sup>Grove's expression</sup> 'Grove' was more or less ~~his name / how for~~  
 an escapade. ~~Their talk together became more and more official.~~

It occurred to him <sup>when she talked</sup> ~~quite often~~ / that she sounded ~~when she talked as~~  
~~if~~ she'd been listening to someone else's <sup>voice</sup> and, being impressionable, had  
 absorbed <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ voice as her own. He tried to divine what sort of person  
 this was. He thought it was a small person---there was an unusual note  
 of envy and bitterness in her sometimes. It wasn't the voice she'd had  
 all these years. And secondly it seemed to him that she was absorbing  
 middle-class arguments about life. This was perhaps where her matter-  
 of-fact tone came from. He wasn't alone with her any longer; there was  
 this third person. She was now in the habit of getting up suddenly during  
 a conversation and changing the subject, whereas before she'd always stuck  
 at a thing and not let her mind interfere. She now seemed to have learned  
 a social manner of avoiding dangerous and continuous themes. One evening  
 she said in a crisp way that didn't belong to her, "After all, there's  
 more in life than thinking out one's personal problems, you know!" ~~He~~  
~~realised how little he'd associated her with the middle-classes before.~~  
 But ~~now~~ she was beginning to use the vocabulary he'd first recognised in  
 Sussex. It was peculiar to hear her say how 'sensitive' somebody was,  
 and she stunned him by saying just before they went to bed one evening that  
 she found his 'philosophy' interesting. His mouth fell open and he put  
 out his hand slightly as if to catch hold of her in her disguise, as  
 another person, but in a second she was the <sup>real</sup> Pinkie <sup>again.</sup> ~~held always known~~  
 again. ~~If she went out to a pub or the cafe in the Commercial Road~~

she usually wore tight slacks and a provocative hair-style now, as if to tell him that she belonged to another group and had her freedom. But, again, these were trifling or tenuous things, and he was barred from mentioning ~~mentioning~~ them. It could all be put down to his imagination.

He found he could get on quite well if he read the newspaper every morning, saw two or three people <sup>during the day</sup> and made sure that there was at least one event <sup>from</sup> in the day <sup>before that</sup> he could talk <sup>to them</sup> about. This made the obligatory outward conversation possible. Real <sup>talk</sup> communication was out of the question. Dick was the only one who did it, with his girls. He'd found a way of doing it inside the system <sup>of work and city-life</sup> all round them---and 'hats off to him', thought Granville. They couldn't make their own lives any more: they could only make new actions. The job at the office, their newspapers, the hurried sound in the streets, drew them all further and further into the system, and the only satisfactory thing to do was to lean on the system and forego all thought and self-responsibility. There were laws, and one wasn't likely to break them. One could leave everything to the outside world and never communicate one's real self to other people; there was a comfort in this; the cycle of happiness and pain, the natural rise and fall of life, didn't seem to apply <sup>any more</sup>. There was a numbed but safe consistency. No one was sufficiently alone to <sup>be in control of his life any more.</sup> ~~give guidance any more.~~

*ital*  
He always thought he was about to get inside Dick and Hanni, to a true intimacy, but it never happened. ~~He never understood what their thoughts were. Unreasonably, he felt they knew what his thoughts were.~~  
*ital*  
He could see Pinkie: he could feel her existence. But they were closed to him as perhaps no other people had been in his life. Their silence always felt like a withholding of something that could or should be said and was actually <sup>in</sup> on their minds. He had a constant sense of suppression in their company, and of mental surveillance, with remarks released by policy, after strict censorship. ~~In the group~~ they were sometimes nick-

named 'the poltergeists' <sup>perhaps</sup> for this reason.

When he had a quiet talk with Hanni the deadlock was broken, for a time. She got several afternoons off and came to the house. They walked in Kensington Gardens and sometimes bathed in the Lido. He was quite glad to be with her, as if to convince her that he had no unusual feelings towards Pinkie and that his life was going along smoothly. He wanted her to have no fixed conclusions about him. So each time they walked together it was like a bid for freedom ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> a pre-conceived judgement on her part. It always seemed that a subject was being avoided: was it Pinkie? But their tone was intimate. They laughed and talked quite gaily, yet he was nervous all the time. He had the impression that his life was wearing down slowly. Why couldn't he speak to her clearly about what he feared? Because he didn't want to show himself in weakness. And why didn't he want to show himself in weakness? Because whether he liked it or not suffering was weakness in the society they had made between the four of them. ~~Also shame was attached to being alone. He might go off and find another girl, then speak intimately with her about Pinkie: that would fulfil better the~~

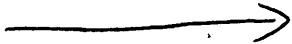
~~requirement of public form and action. But now he was alone, and could be seen as purely a victim. He certainly wished to hide that from Dick, who fled from situations in which people were alone in their grief.~~ When Hanni <sup>went</sup> ~~was~~ down with 'flu ~~or a bad cold~~ Dick stayed in the Hampton Court flat as little as possible, and only made a feeble effort at nursing her ~~at the beginning.~~ He would look at her and say quite candidly, "I can't understand how I ever made love to you, <sup>Reverend Mother,</sup> ~~xxxxxxx~~ / You look like a <sup>railway</sup> porter!" ~~at Victoria station."~~


It was always pleasant at the Lido. There were some lovely days. He ~~had a great yearning~~ <sup>ed</sup> for something new to happen, an escape de like Dick's, <sup>perhaps,</sup> and also he had the <sup>an optimistic</sup> ~~growing~~ sense that ~~something would~~ <sup>his life</sup> ~~indeed happen~~ soon. The hot sunlight that drenched everything gave him this confidence. He talked to Hanni about <sup>Sarah</sup> ~~Mosul~~ at some length, but whenever it seemed possible that he would launch into one of his speeches--- when he leaned forward slightly and began glaring in front of him---she would repeat, "Mm, mm," in a frantic way, nodding all the time, as if to tell him that she knew everything he was going to say and so he needn't say it. She had a horror of <sup>him</sup> ~~being bored by him,~~ <sup>ing her, it seemed;</sup> and anything that was the slightest departure from <sup>practical</sup> ~~plain and simple~~ statements of fact carried <sup>this</sup> ~~a threat~~ <sup>of this</sup>. But there was a pleasure in ~~this~~ for him: it was nice to choose little statements carefully, rather in Dick's candid style, like, "I think Glenning comes round to us for what he misses in his own home, don't you?" And then she would tell him a little anecdote about Glenning---how he once left his wife in a waiting-room at Norwich ~~railway~~ station and only remembered <sup>her</sup> when he stepped off the train at Liverpool Street! ~~They got on well, she said, because the wife was so stupid that~~ <sup>Glenning's</sup> ~~she~~ ~~all she wanted to do was to have babies;~~ ~~She had absolutely no control over them and that was an added reason why Glenning got away whenever he could. She thought he had a bit of a crush on Pinkie, but he was too much of a gentleman to make an approach.~~ He did wonderful vaudeville.

Glennings wife was so stupid that all she wanted was to have babies, she said. She and Glennings were always 'on the job', it seemed---for instance, they would dress each other in impeccable outdoor clothes and then during a deliberately formal conversation undress each other again little by little, until they were on the bed together. His wife would ask him questions about the office like ~~ix~~ a secretary. "How are woollens doing these days?" she would ask. "Oh, not too bad!" he would say as he slipped off her skirt, "A two-percent rise this week!"

Hanni would go from one anecdote to another in her chanting voice, chuckling now and then. "Dick was at it last night," she would say, "and every time he pushed I did a loud fart! He said it was like conducting a Sousa march!"

But he had the impression that talking like this hurt her as well. She hadn't a natural, flowing ribaldry. She flickered her eyelids in a pained way.

She would complain about Dick in a monotonous voice, tight-lipped and brooding; underneath, she seemed concerned about him, in an irritated, maternal way. Sometimes it seemed that she was talking about Pinkie as well; while mentioning only Dick's name: she would turn to him as if he knew 



what she meant already, through Pinkie. They began to share a grievance. Dick and Pinkie had what they called the 'blind' quality, of pursuing their own pleasures whatever happened; and stepping across other people as if they weren't there; they didn't notice small details; they'd both been spoiled in childhood in one way, and yet not spoiled<sup>in another</sup>---deprived of something<sup>felt</sup> ~~from the other.~~ They didn't know what it was like to be 'someone else.' But this left ~~them~~<sup>him, and perhaps them,</sup> with an uncomfortable feeling that they themselves were only more ethical because they were inactive, and that the other two had <sup>more</sup> the pluck ~~to satisfy~~<sup>to satisfy</sup> their real impulses ~~which he and Hanni, in~~<sup>retrograde in the proportion that probably</sup> ~~essentially, shared, as well.~~ It rendered them spectators of the other two, which wasn't flattering to the pride.

him and Hanni

Behind Hanni's <sup>panicky</sup> ~~impetuous~~ <sup>mm, mm's</sup> when he made any departure from strict facts there was always the implication that one day---not now, because this wasn't the time or occasion---she would reveal all the thoughts and facts and values on which she based her silent appraisal of things and her pre-knowledge of what he was going to say: but as with Dick the time never came; it was never the occasion! Yet he always believed she had the power to tell him. And he concluded that what he was about to say had no interest<sup>for her</sup>, and curbed himself. So, despite the growing intimacy between them, he felt the same edge of stiffness as always before; there was always the tremulous <sup>frontier</sup> ~~edge~~ where they doubted each other and had to rehearse their statements, and force their faces into a smile. Much was due to <sup>her</sup> a fear ~~she had~~ of him; ~~or seemed to have.~~ Pinkie said she didn't like the way he 'glared' at her sometimes. ~~He told himself that she and Dick were his friends, but the hours with them weren't full enough.~~

falls

At last he was silent with her unless he had something grimly factual to say. <sup>Hanni</sup> She gave the impression of <sup>a</sup> dark, <sup>and rather deadly</sup> ~~slimness~~ and calm, something held very deeply inside her, timidly from the world but also obstinate. Yet she always answered him anxiously, whatever he asked her. She was always trying to oblige; but there was still this locked reserve in her. More and more, he was silent with her unless he had something grimly factual to say.

but he preferred it to being alone---his nerves played such tricks on him. One afternoon, in the silent house, an unaccountable terror caught hold of him. It was about a quarter to four and he'd just finished eating. He got up to carry the dirty plates to the sink---there was the swish of a passing bus in the distance, and an aeroplane throbbed overhead. He ran water into the bowl and slipped the plates in. But he didn't wash up, only turned away absently, his hand still on the water-tap.

Then this unbearable nervous tremor started in him. He held his breath, listening for the sound of the downstairs door. But nothing came. His stomach actually seemed to quake and quiver, sending out shafts of horror all ~~xxxxxxxx~~ through him, and a foreboding darkness approached him, like the slow, hot breeze he had felt that same afternoon in the street below, flowing past him with a solemn, ominous movement. The silence had become grim and hollow, like the silence round a dead person. He moved a foot, and the boards creaked under the linoleum as if only a dead wind had stirred them, nothing human.

He'd begun to think about Pinkie: he realised this---it wasn't ~~xxxx~~ a thought so much as the shadow of herself that had passed over him! She must have done or said something against him at that moment---twenty miles away, close by, it didn't matter! He believed in these ghostly connections between people. He saw her hand sliding gently down the face of---. But the picture faded. Yet perhaps he had the impression---or had he planted the impression?---of a young man's face, pale and smiling while Pinkie's hand made its cruelly suggestive, delicious, stroking motion?

Yes, she was always out these days! A hot-dread spread over him. He ran downstairs to the bedroom and flung open the wardrobe door. Her best coat was gone! Her best coat! Her best summer coat! But what did that mean? Nothing! Her shoes, then---her shoes---! He tore out all the heaped shoes in a frenzy---her best shoes, where were they? Or her ~~handbag~~ handbag---her black handbag, for the evenings---that would prove something! He kicked the door closed again, crushing the frail shoes and <sup>the</sup> piles of old ~~xxx~~ stockings and silk scarves together, and rushed next door. There! But no, <sup>the handbag</sup> wasn't in its usual place, on the bookshelf, close to the piano, close to his precious gramophone---! Yes, she had wanted to look elegant this afternoon!

He stood in the middle of the room panting and staring down at the carpet. He felt a giddy trembling so violent that his legs hardly seemed able to support him any more.

The door opened suddenly and Hanni was standing in the doorway, calm and still. He turned round with a start, gaping at her.

"Whatever's the matter, Pip?" she asked.

"Oh---hullo!"

He smiled. His heart was still beating fast. She looked round the room slowly.

"Is anything wrong?"

She came further into the room and at that moment he raised his hand, unawares, to ~~mixxxxx~~ touch his nose. She saw it trembling ever so slightly. The light from the street shone up into her eyes as she turned towards the window, making them seem darker than they were, a deep, mottled colour, nearly an absolute black. Not a sound came from the street.

"No," he murmured. "Why?" Then he added at once, to make talk, "Have you just come?"

"Yes."

He stood with his legs astride, not knowing what to do with his hands until she spoke again.

"What about some coffee?" she said.

"Yes---fine!"

She turned to go upstairs and gave him a quick, searching look. His trembling ceased and the colour came back to his face. As he followed <sup>her</sup> up the stairs awkwardly he felt much like a child, hanging his head.

She glanced out of the kitchen window, at the roofs near the river.

"It's a wonderful day," she said. "Have you been out?"

"Just down the road, that's all."

She turned to look at him, slowly, still seeming to wonder.

"Shall we go to the Lido, Pip?"

"Yes!"

They left right away, not troubling about the coffee.

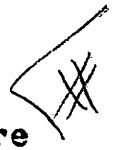
To P. 369

a sudden change came over him:

~~At the London one~~ <sup>That</sup> afternoon, after they'd been swimming, he was aware

of the sunlight over the lake in front of them as a blinding yellow flash across the sky spread out to infinity, and including in one moment all his life; It was a revelation of stupefying hope, in which he felt his whole future contained in goodness, and resolved! All the bad things of his present life would go. But even now, at this moment, he was free! For the first time since his return he had an excited sense of the city round him, and a sense that it didn't matter what his life was or what happened at home, because of all the other activities that were open to him every day, as one member lost in a mass of others, with out a name as far as suffering went. He kicked out his leg involuntarily, dripping with water, in a happy spasm of freedom, already celebrating the future, and he looked at Hanni with a <sup>relieved</sup> happy smile.

~~He was no longer the victim of events. He now had the knack of the city: it wasn't its way at all to let life ride over one, or to wait and listen to the listen to the silence; that wasn't the city's way at all. One had to act, and choose from the array of chances it put before one. He would do something! He didn't know what yet, but he would do something to change his life. Let him spend the money he had, for instance---he could take <sup>the other three</sup> them ~~all~~ to a club. <sup>Already a fortnight</sup> There was a little <sup>had passed.</sup> less than a fortnight left for him to act. How slowly the city had re-asserted its hold on him! Of course, he was a Londoner---why hadn't he realised that before? The spirit had gone away from him! He could go out into the <sup>se</sup> streets as he'd always done in the past, and lose himself, as if life was eternal and he was walking up and down the span of eternal time, looking in at the lighted shop windows! He made no specific proposal of action to himself; something would turn up; the club-idea was only momentary, a suggestion. <sup>But</sup> He was quite certain that, now he was in a fit mood, his life would change. He dragged Hanni into the water again, whooping and laughing, and they splashed together under the diving board. She blinked at him, delighted and wondering. He'd shaken ~~her~~ <sup>Bastah</sup> off! He'd~~



l.c.

n.p.

l.c.

found himself! And after two or three swims up and down the enclosure they went in again, puffing hard, and threw themselves down on the grass, where the trees were. "The water seems to do you good!" Hanni panted. He got a sudden dazzling impression of her, as someone he did know after all. The long grass was extraordinarily vivid against the slight darkness of her skin. It all looked so strange under the trees, in the middle of a city, with people's white skin against the grass, in the shade of tall trees, with the bright light draining through the leaves in speckles, and here and there a negro, stark black, with glowing white eyes and teeth. And there were sunshades, red and yellow, with prams and also blankets spread out. n.p. "Are you ever ashamed of being lonely?" he asked her suddenly, gazing at her in a very direct way, but too fresh from the water to care. As she dried herself, panting, she looked up, first with the slightest blink, as if reservation would take hold of her again and chill everything, and said, "Yes, sometimes!" It gave him <sup>such</sup> a perfect sense of relief to ask an honest question, not <sup>simply</sup> a prepared question in an honest style. In that moment everything seemed humbug that people talked, a nervous humbug that ~~was~~ imposed by the city. She didn't move for a little time. For a moment he thought she was going to take her little reply back by saying something clever or facetious, but as if she knew what he expected of her--- she had such a gift for that---she went on drying herself quietly, with some little grief in her eyes as she looked down at the grass, lowering her head to rub the towel against her neck. He felt lazy and lay down, looking up at the trees. And she seemed <sup>suddenly</sup> ~~to be~~ relieved to be out of his scrutiny. She'd said to Pinkie at the training-school, years before, that <sup>he</sup> Granville was the sort of person who tried to 'pin you on to a board' for his collection of 'butterflies.' Pollocke had said that was absurd, <sup>only</sup> Hanni ~~thought it.~~ <sup>she'd</sup> And he wondered now if in a silent manner ~~they'd~~ passed beyond that mistrust. The sun was still shining on the water in a great yellowness, flung lavishly over the trees and bushes on the other

side of the lake, and he became happy again at the thought of the dusty, hot streets that began at the edge of the park, and the cafés that would be filling with people about this time, the first taxis of the evening <sup>^</sup>-rush that would turn the corner at Queen's Gate, the musty smell of beer as the pubs opened, and ~~the dark interiors that seemed to~~ <sup>the dark interiors that seemed to</sup> wait for the evening to come ~~properly~~ <sup>for</sup> and dusk to fall! He thought of these things in quick succession, in an ecstatic mood anointed in this yellowness, a magnificent, dazzling splash that extended to the outermost spaces of reality in a vast sunset. How strange that he hadn't felt properly in the city until now! All those painful little thoughts at the house would be gone. He would be able to stand his full height. That was what they meant when they said 'old Pip'---a gay and reckless sort of person, not this little thinking insect!

"Why did you ask that?" Hanni said.

"I don't know!"

The words were out of his mouth before he knew where he was. He was about to go on, to say that he deduced the sort of life she led from the one he led. He wanted to break the silence that had hung over his life since his return---talk about all the intimate fears that had been playing at his mind, and the misery he'd sunk into, and the fact that he saw nothing before him in the future, not at least as far as Pinkie went; and how he'd felt the weight of an accusation on him after his return, that he'd sent away all Pinkie's friends from the house, and that <sup>he felt</sup> he represented a shadow over her life, and how thankful he'd been that a group had re-formed, even though it was without Grove! And 'Grove'---! But he couldn't do it. He let the moment pass. And she blinked, recording everything so minutely with her face as she always did, as if she'd felt the breath of his revelations pass over <sup>her</sup> ~~them~~ and then die away again before they <sup>could</sup> turned to speech. So they were back again in deadlock! Yet she seemed satisfied with his "I don't know!" and his laugh afterwards!

that sounded hollow to himself.' And they were too tired and hungry from the bathing to want to talk any more. The moment had passed.)

*step n.p.*  
 People were beginning to pack up their things and leave. The stillness, that had muffled everybody's voice and turned what they said into a whisper, was broken now. The traffic from Knightsbridge sounded like a wind in the distance, level and unchanging, representing the city's preparation for evening. The other side of the lake looked like a coastline very far away. Perhaps he endowed her with more strength than she had, and also <sup>perhaps</sup> she feared his expectations of her! Perhaps they were all doing that to each other! But <sup>still</sup> he couldn't bring himself to speak. She picked up the cloth ~~bag~~ she'd brought with her and they walked across the park towards the road. He was aware of her as a kind of little sentinel at his side, always armed, smooth, brown and slim, her eyebrows meeting in the middle like a frontier across her face, a black, negative line. The tufted grass stretched away before them, and the trees clustered together, beginning to contain the first shadows of the evening. He looked back as they plodded across the sand of Rotten Row, at the sky, for a last glimpse; dusk was just stirring, like a vast shroud of dust touched with

red getting closer and closer to the earth. It fell so lightly, little by little, that it might be a breath of air, given substance, almost making a stir that could be heard. Their shoes made a quiet swishing noise in the grass, much like the countryside, except for the level roar of traffic that drew near<sup>er</sup>. When they got back he bought a dozen bottles of wine and rang up Dick to tell him to come over for a little party. Dick was quite pleased---"I see Pip's getting back into his old form," he murmured, <sup>added that</sup> but he couldn't manage it, <sup>the swish</sup> as he was having dinner with 'an important contact on the distaff side'. In a lower voice he asked, "Is Hanni there?" and when Granville said yes he added, "Tell her I'm giving a talk on free trade at the local Y.M.C.A." Y.M.C.A. meant 'You're My Choice All right'--- so Hanni told him afterwards. It was Dick's private language and indicated that he would be taking a girl out <sup>--- probably the one he'd caught him with at Hampton Court, she said ---</sup> but wouldn't be unfaithful to her. She didn't seem annoyed, and they drank a tumbler of wine together. There was quite a jolly evening after Pinkie came home. They made a punch, combining the wine with brandy and lemon juice, and Glenning called in after theatre-time with a few others. <sup>Lucy and Ginger came.</sup> It <sup>grew into</sup> ~~became~~ a party. There were the usual records, including ~~the~~ one that had always stirred him called 'The Creole Shake'. And Dick came in after all at about midnight with a sorry expression: the girl got a slap-up dinner out of him, he said, and then went straight home afterwards, almost without looking at him again. Hanni was delighted, and Dick danced with her again and again, not even pausing when there was no music, his body tight against hers and his head lowered on to her shoulders, so that he seemed to be whispering ~~little~~ messages in her ear ~~all the time.~~

Thus, Granville gave his first party since his return, on his own initiative. This made a great difference to Pinkie---that he'd done it himself, unexpectedly. ~~It was always she who had to do the arranging--- he was usually reluctant. "another day," he would say, and then when the time <sup>did</sup> came he would enjoy it, or seem to.~~ She gave him a kiss on the

neck ~~exactly~~ similar to the first she'd ever given him. ~~He could keep her--he could put their marriage back on an even keel if he wanted to! Look how gay and affectionate she was when he did something off his own bat! Why did he usually prefer doing nothing? Because she must find her own level, he told himself; and because that level wasn't his. But from tonight that didn't matter.~~ <sup>He'd found his feet again!</sup> ~~Life was~~ <sup>back to normal!</sup> <sup>before!</sup> Of course he'd been a jolly person two years ~~ago~~. That was what they meant by 'Pip'! It was like coming back home to himself after a long absence. And the other three looked wonderful <sup>that</sup> this evening, so clear and cheerful: how ungrateful he'd been to neglect them! The nightmares were finished. What did it matter, all this absurd calculation as to who was being loyal to whom? He had a <sup>glorious</sup> wonderful sensation of being alone and free and also happy, an extraordinary combination; he even felt close to Dick's dandyism! That would need practice! For the first time since his return <sup>Barrah</sup> ~~he~~ seemed not to have been his own ~~experience~~ <sup>at all.</sup> And it had all happened through a yellow flash across the sky/<sup>in Kensington Gardens</sup> ~~that would be~~ called a 'mystical' <sup>Walsh would have</sup> experience!

<sup>h.b./e.c.</sup> <sup>During the party</sup> <sup>some</sup> He got tipsy and sat talking with Hanni again. Dick had gone into the bedroom where <sup>half</sup> the others were, sitting in candlelight, with the gas-fire on. There was a great din and bustle, ~~going on~~, and the air was thick with smoke, though all the windows were open. Pinkie was at the phone and he had a stirring of his old fears, but they were gone when she returned to the room looking ~~as~~ as gay as before. The street was quite still outside, and their noise echoed across <sup>it</sup>. He wondered if there'd be a complaint from the neighbours, but there wasn't. Hanni was confidential, as always at a party, and she asked him again what his question had meant that afternoon. "Why did you suddenly ask me that?" she said. They sat on the divan while people pushed past their legs, trying to dance. It wasn't a true confidence between them. He perceived <sup>this</sup> ~~that~~ through his clouded brain. It was Dick's style---this cool probing, not hers.

But he joined in the game. And, as before, he tried to lay himself bare.

"I was deducing something from myself," he said.

*What---that you're ashamed?"*  
*Again the words were out of his mouth like a reflex-action.*

"No, no!" / "I mean being lonely!"

She puffed at her cigarette slowly, her eyes narrowed. "In what way?"

"I suppose as we all are!"

~~And~~ Again his spirit had failed him, or rather the spirit simply wasn't there, while she moved hardly a muscle, gazing straight before her. What had he meant that afternoon? He hadn't an idea! He hadn't a thought in his head! How could he begin to talk about all those complicated little puzzles of intimacy? Where would he begin? He hadn't Dick's gift! She nodded after his last remark, her eyes almost closed against the smoke of her cigarette in their characteristic way.

"Yes, we're all rather lonely, I suppose," she said, finishing off a conversation that had contained nothing.

*could have replied to this*  
He ~~still had time to go on~~ but a clear thought refused to come into his head. With drinks inside him he was only fit to dance or ~~smoke about~~ *play the fool* but ~~talking was out of the question.~~ *suddenly* He was in a whirl of self-consciousness. He tried again *with Hanni:* why shouldn't he mention Grove now? Why not ask what Pinkie did on Friday evenings? Why not talk about how he yearned to make love to Pinkie sometimes and she yawned in his face? *That was the honest style he should learn.* The words were there! But he couldn't. His mouth was fixed. The drinks ~~had acted~~ *only helped to* as a paralysis *e. t. m.* He whirled round in his thoughts, and couldn't escape them. Thank God his leave was ending soon, at any rate! Suddenly he had a sharp sense of regret, that he had indeed laid himself bare to ~~her~~ *Hanni* in the short sentence he'd uttered, and that she had him ~~caught~~ *had* and that he hadn't done justice *to* / himself in those few words, and so had made things doubly worse! Oh, why had he talked? A flush began to rise up his

<sup>felt as if</sup>  
~~was~~ nec k. He was caught, caught! It ~~was like~~ all his limbs and insides  
<sup>were</sup> being transfixed and held still, without ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> flow of blood through them.  
 The longer the silence lasted between them the more he accused himself. →  
~~And like most self-accusation its verdict was that he'd fallen short of~~  
~~an image of himself.~~ What was this image? Who had made it? <sup>Dick, Pinkie - himself?</sup> Really  
~~he carried it before him in his mind all the time.~~ <sup>He realised it suddenly</sup> If only he could  
~~break through it!~~ <sup>Where</sup> ~~Where did the theme of the relationship between the~~  
~~four of them come from? Was it Dick, Pinkie? One of the two? It wasn't~~  
~~Hanni: she would have followed a lead with simplicity.~~ <sup>What did 'Pip' see, what was the image? Dick, of course,</sup> 'Pip' was jolly;  
 he was a sunny sort of person; that was the image? ~~and~~ It wouldn't do for  
 him to show himself jealous, glowering, lonely, torn as perhaps he'd never  
 been before in his life; <sup>it could break the image of course!</sup> The 'orang-utang' was just a joke; it was the  
<sup>to keep the image intact</sup> jolly fellow making faces! And, of course, laying himself bare would  
~~break this image, too.~~ But how had the image started? And why did he, who  
 was the ever-moving base of the image, cling to it like a raft? Was  
 Hanni an image, for him? Was Pinkie? Dick? Were all four of them  
 images, <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>had</sup> the lonely voice ~~was~~ locked deep inside them and never known?  
 He knew nothing about them! What did Hanni and Dick think, what did  
 Pinkie do when she was out of his sight? What did he know about his <sup>own</sup>  
 wife? What did any of them know about him? Nothing! He never told  
 them! And, for some reason, in their world, things had to be told:  
 in their world silence was absence of speech, not stillness. <sup>Dick did tell his thoughts, but with</sup> Their  
 lives were at a standstill--all four of them! Here he was thinking about  
 the style in which life should be lived: relationships and images!  
 Life might be a role for which they'd been cast, and they in a perpetual  
 discussion about what style of acting was best, while the world went on  
 and they got no younger. None of them was connected with his work.  
 The office went on in the day, and the evening was a different territory  
 altogether. He'd been the same in the few weeks he'd had at the London  
 office, before they went to <sup>Basrah,</sup> Mosul. They wiped the work off them as best

too deliberate a style; if only the style could be got rid of,  
 leaving them bare to each other, not thinking all the time!

they could when they got in at night: Pinkie had now got into the habit of taking a bath when she came in, and turning the water on before she'd even taken off her coat. <sup>(that hadn't been his experience)</sup> But ~~that hadn't been his experience~~ <sup>Basal</sup> in Mosul. The work went on into the evening--it flowed on: he went out with Mohammed to the Mesopotamis Hotel, and some <sup>times</sup> of the other clerks ~~might~~ <sup>at</sup> join them. What was the difference? The work was an atmosphere: it was connected with ports and treks across the desert and daily flights between Beirut and Cairo. The day wasn't strictly divided up but flowed, like the ~~s~~ <sup>ill-</sup>ness!

→ n.p. Happily for his feelings Hanni went on talking, but about Dick. At once the <sup>horrid</sup> whirl of his thoughts ceased. Dick, <sup>she said,</sup> ~~apparently~~ was frightened of going mad. Gra nville felt he understood this very well at the moment! ~~Yes, Dick must have been in that kind of whirl many times, trying to find his image: what else was his flippant talk but trying to lay an image?~~ She said she was often worried about him. <sup>Dick</sup> ~~she~~ would <sup>sit</sup> still for hours in the most uncanny way, without doing anything, or he would get up and prowl round the room <sup>with his head buried in his collar,</sup> ~~all the time~~ usually the latter, as if <sup>something inside him</sup> there was something in him he wanted to run away from. He'd told her once that ~~now and then~~ if he <sup>had the chance of</sup> ~~could~~ <sup>own</sup> jump out of his body into somebody else's he'd <sup>take it</sup> ~~do so~~ with pleasure, and risk being ugly or lame for the rest of his life! He hated the passing of time, she said. The moment never came when he felt really himself and enjoyed it; well, there were moments, perhaps a day, a wonderful summer's day, but it didn't last; and the passing of time <sup>meant a</sup> ~~was like~~ the perpetual loss of opportunities. She seemed to understand him very well, talking softly, <sup>it</sup> ~~as if she~~ <sup>was</sup> talking about herself. The emptiness all round us appalled him, she said. Sometimes he couldn't see how human beings had managed to fill the earth up with objects <sup>enough</sup> ~~sufficiently~~ to make it look <sup>t</sup> tempting. Of course he was frightened of getting old; that followed. ~~The emptiness would get hold of him more and more~~ That was why he had affairs and was always think-

Key

about women. He had a 'thing' about breasts; he told her ~~that when he~~  
~~made him feel~~ <sup>floating</sup> ~~he felt~~ he was <sup>on</sup> the face of eternity. It was much more that  
 sort of thing, she said, than the actual kissing and the actual women that  
 interested him. He always said ~~that~~ he enjoyed sleeping with her much  
 better than with anybody else; and that it was getting better and better  
 with time. But there was always this other quest, which had to do with  
 his fears ~~and of course~~ his vanity. Yet vanity wasn't the right word;  
 he was <sup>at</sup> ~~totally~~ <sup>vain.</sup> ~~without vanity.~~ But he had to be reassured, and she couldn't  
 do it on her own; no one woman would do it. She had asked him the previous  
 day why, if he was frightened of <sup>felt empty,</sup> ~~emptiness,~~ he didn't give up the Hampton  
 Court place, which couldn't be emptier. Why didn't they move into London,  
 where neither of them had ever lived? And he said he couldn't bear the  
 idea of being 'classified' as he would be if he lived in London; <sup>where to</sup>  
~~some extent one reflected the kind of district one lived in,~~ if he lived  
 in the City he'd be 'well, nondescript'; Chelsea was 'arty-bohemia';  
 Kensington was 'faded genteel'; Notting Hill Gate was 'plain squalid';  
 Westminster---that was the one district he wouldn't mind living in, "and  
 the one place," Hanni added, "where the rents are fabulous, of course!"  
 How much more intimate a person she was than he. <sup>side,</sup> ~~It was a cool,~~  
 drowsy thought <sup>that came into his head</sup> as he lay back on the divan at her ~~divan~~ sweating slightly  
 in the breeze ~~that came~~ from the windows behind them, while the clattering  
 music ceased for a moment. Suppose he was the cause of the deadlock  
 between the four of them? Well, he made his contribution, no doubt.  
 And that thought made him content: he wasn't <sup>among people quite</sup> ~~in a pattern~~ <sup>totally</sup> foreign  
 to him; ~~it was his fight as well as theirs.~~

The party ended at dawn, and there were the four of them left, sit-  
 ting over breakfast in the kitchen as a grey, cloudy sky began to <sup>rise</sup> ~~appear~~  
 outside, like a new presence stealing through the window and changing  
 all the furniture with soft touches. Dick jumped up and gave a ridiculous  
 account of how Pinkie ate. She had an acute dislike of being watched

over her food, ~~because she took such relish in it and was afraid she might~~ <sup>126 distinct</sup> ~~appear greedy.~~ Her first few mouthfuls <sup>of eating</sup> would be tentative, when she was tasting something, and there would be a slight frown on her face as if she were listening to the food in some way. <sup>and</sup> Dick watched her deliberately, until she laid down her knife and fork slowly and murmured, "Look here, Pollocke, attend to your own bloody rations or I'll ~~slash you round the chops and~~ take that supercilious <sup>grin</sup> smile off your face!" At once he jumped up and gave a kind of speech. "Every morsel is weighed up and rolled about the mouth," he cried, "every taste-bud is on the qui vive with quick, exploring movements of the mandibles she opens <sup>up</sup> ever new layers of taste for the enslaved, ~~drone-serving~~ salival juices! Then, with a last salute, the dignitaries of the mouth lining the route in panoply of office, she flings it down to the cellars of the stomach where restive bohemians lie in wait over candlelight, reeking with yesterday's garlic!" His beard wagged up and down in the most comical way, and he didn't pause for a moment, as if he'd rehearsed it. He once told Granville that at school he'd been famous for this sort of thing. He had a <sup>peculiar</sup> wonderful burlesque vigour and extravagance in which ~~his~~ his coolness disappeared.

Life was easier in the next few days. He went to the café more often, and didn't feel obliged to leave when he'd drained his cup, but hung on reading or talking to people. Or he walked in Kensington Gardens. ~~At last he belonged to the life round him;~~ ~~He'd~~ gone back to his old

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*After a while*  
 life, or so he told himself. But he couldn't recollect what his old  
 life had been! *he couldn't recollect the tone* He'd <sup>been</sup> more in less in  
 harmony with Pinkie <sup>then</sup>---that was one thing he remembered. But still there'd  
*n.p.* ~~had~~ been something feverish underneath---always. [He was rarely in his  
 room now. His day had quite a routine. He read the paper over break-  
 fast, after Pinkie had gone, and then went down to the bedroom to make  
 the bed and write letters or read; then he went out for a coffee. He  
 happened to look at himself in the mirror more closely than usual one  
 morning and noticed that the skin round his eyes was very pale, and that  
 his cheeks had lost their colour. He no longer had <sup>that</sup> the weathered look.

In the music-room he happened to pick up a medical encyclopedia of  
 Pinkie's that was lying on the coffee-table. This was the book that the  
 young man with the ginger beard, at the time of her first studio-party,  
 had seduced her with, *so she'd told him*. Ginger-Beard had opened it at  
 the venereal sections <sup>with its</sup> ~~which had~~ diagrams and lurid illustrations of the  
 sexual parts, and he'd discussed it all with her so unambiguously that  
 the act itself, when it came, seemed only <sup>the</sup> ~~an experiment~~ demonstration  
 of a <sup>dead</sup> hypothesis. *W.A. Walsh* And the pages fell open naturally at these  
 sections now. The first thing <sup>Granville</sup> he saw was a description under the word  
 SYPHILIS. The tertiary stage was particularly frightful. It had the  
 effect of blindness or madness, and could be inherited; the child of  
 someone in the tertiary stage might be born blind. *Now after he thought*  
 It sounded <sup>just</sup> like the <sup>state</sup> ~~consciousness~~ he and the other three had fallen into.  
 The effect of blindness, and it could be inherited! And it was infectious  
<sup>in</sup> ~~at~~ all its stages, incubatory, primary, secondary and tertiary! The last  
 was incurable! It sounded quite like old Dick! Incurable! They were  
 blind, and nealy <sup>r</sup> mad: mute and blind! Mad and mute and blind!

He remembered something about Dick: it was the nature of his anger;  
 one couldn't call it real anger. It didn't come out properly, <sup>as Walsh's habit</sup> When  
 he'd got furious with Hanni and Pinkie a few weeks before, just after his

promotion to the South American office, ~~for~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~locking~~ <sup>had</sup> him, he only went white round his lips, and his voice cracked. <sup>It</sup> reminded Granville of Walsh. <sup>It</sup> There was n't an anger that suffused all his body and made him flush, in a <sup>healthy</sup> ~~good~~ flow. ~~If that had been so he might have been violent;~~ his anger was a violence held back. The anger didn't seem to do him good. He had no voice to be angry with---he physically couldn't raise his voice, <sup>it seemed!</sup> ~~it seemed!~~ He was rational in his flesh, <sup>even</sup> ~~it seemed;~~ as an inherited condition. The anger was physically prevented, as if the necessary vocal chords were missing. He could become steely, his eyes glassy and his lips pale, or else indignant in a plaintive manner that was nearer his gentle nature. But the anger was always checked in a pre-conscious manner; the check was already there, in his flesh; <sup>it was</sup> a conflict and distortion already accepted by the flesh, and written into his body; ~~so to speak~~ so that it had become ~~simply what anger was for him~~---a white-hot flame, destructive, with a dangerous <sup>licking</sup> ~~razor~~ edge, that flashed through him and then abated, usually, in silence; this was what 'a nger' was <sup>in</sup> ~~for~~ him. The middle part of the body constricted and pulled itself in; it didn't <sup>as in</sup> ~~expand~~ <sup>Granville,</sup> expand, with an even greater flow of ease than before. As in Walsh, there was nothing righteous or handsome about the anger. It really did border on hysteria---if it had come out it would have been hysteria! ~~and so it had to be avoided. Perhaps he'd been taught that~~

And Granville was beginning to feel the same thing in himself, as a shadow, perhaps through the remorse he felt after anger. There would be a spurt of sourness inside him, really like a gland spraying a kind of acid round his guts---he remembered it at the Lido, in the moment when Hanni had seemed about to disregard his question. This sourness seemed to him yellow. He'd never known it before. Was this the first organic sign of what Dick had learned as a child, in his glands and tissues?

ly avoid shows of anger so as to be spared the remorse. Had that process occurred in Dick and Walsh, in childhood, so deep that they weren't aware of it? Anger <sup>hadn't</sup> ~~didn't~~ happen <sup>in</sup> the parents; it <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ outlawed; there <sup>had</sup> ~~were~~ only <sup>been</sup> 'outbursts'---a chair might be broken, a door slammed, crockery smashed, because the true nature of the body would have its will sometimes. ~~What a monstrous world to inherit,~~ <sup>What he felt</sup> ~~Granville had fallen~~ into a lulled state of life, going to the cafe and walking in Kensington Gardens, in which <sup>he</sup> looked back at some of his own 'outbursts' with mild astonishment. Would the same consciousness grow in him, <sup>until</sup> ~~too~~, so that by the end of his life it <sup>was</sup> ~~could be called~~ tertiary as well? <sup>surface</sup> ~~obvious~~ manifestat-ions---for the <sup>first</sup> ~~bright-red~~, open chancres of syphilis disappeared early?

In this respect he and Pinkie were distinct, at present, from Hanni and Dick. When <sup>he & Pinkie</sup> ~~either of them~~ blew a valve they really let themselves go---Pinkie screamed at the top of her voice; ~~and~~ their blood flowed better afterwards. Hanni <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ the same as Dick, though perhaps only on the surface; ~~she, too, might be slowly succumbing to the new consciousness, through the same medium of remorse.~~ Only a very slight, dangerous flush mounted her cheeks, and her eyes showed a glinting, relentless light. He had the feeling that if Dick had tried to behave like Pinkie and really let himself go, some frightful meanness and spitefulness would have been the result, and this he couldn't afford to let happen. The same might be true of Hanni, though she was too hidden a creature for one to be sure. But Pinkie, at any time in her anger, could be stopped. She didn't have <sup>that</sup> ~~the~~ gleam of relentlessness or ~~the~~ blind refusal of life. In Dick anger <sup>other</sup> meant the severance of connection with/people, but in her it meant ~~other~~ a warmer connection; <sup>and dependence,</sup> she was showing her connection. ~~she~~ ~~she hated Granville to be angry, when he stormed up and down the room.~~ She wept and was frightened. ~~It seemed to him that she expected the kind of outcome from him in anger that she would have got from the tertiary.~~

J

n.p.

l.c.

falls

the

And a smile brought her round at once. Nursing a grievance, scheming to avenge it, were unknown to her. Hanni's angers, on the other hand, lurked as wounded afterthoughts. Pinkie said that Hanni had a genius for creating 'undercurrents': people would sometimes quarrel in her company for no reason.

So they all inherited blindness and madness, one way or another. Would it go on, the legions of disease spreading all over the world through education, until everyone was tertiary? Blind and mad---the whole world! They were planning huge schools in England; it would happen in Africa, Russia, in Asia and China! The senses would go mad!

Yet he didn't feel this would happen. The middle-class road was at the end! The spirochete of education wouldn't take! The body would be too stout and resistant.

*r.p.* ~~resistant for it, perhaps~~ [ At the end of these half-feverish reflections he began to feel a ridiculous hope, like standing before an immense golden plain, ~~like the one he'd known in his socialist vision,~~ on a hot day, with hardly a movement in the air, in a silence that came out of the earth, like the future being laid before him in one visible reality: a plain that stretched placid and <sup>flat</sup> ~~uninterrupted~~ as far as he could see! It had something to do with his own life, with the hope he'd begun to entertain in the last few days, and with the yellow flash across the sky *at the Lido.*

When Pinkie asked him, "Aren't you getting your ticket back?", it was quite a shock.

"Yes, I must see to that!"

He'd begun to think that reality had changed. <sup>But</sup> ~~and~~ how could she bear him to go alone? He refused to tot up how many days he had left. He bought four tickets for a performance of 'Hamlet' he'd read about, with a new actor named de Cloud, which the papers said was a pseudonym and should be pronounced 'de Clue'. They were for the following week, and he had the illusion that it would help conceal the reality ~~that~~ that he had five days left and had made no plans <sup>from the</sup> ~~from the~~ ~~others~~ #


~~Her brother Nigel came over for dinner one evening and they set up a table with candles in the music-room. Nigel looked worried and kept moving his knee rhythmically under the table. There was something outlandish in the ménage for him, perhaps. It reminded Granville of a lunch-date he and Pinkie had had with her uncle, Lord Maimbury, when the same thing had happened: Maimbury's knee had kept moving under the table, as if he was distressed. Nigel was a little greyer than before. Dick wandered in with Hanni when they were at the dessert, and they all sat having a drink. The <sup>friendly</sup> ~~finned~~ lines of the ménage was rather exaggerated, for~~

Suppose he had children? What living sense could he pass on to them? His father had given him a living sense---but what had he got? Education had withered it away! He felt panic-stricken, wanting to strike out the years.

The garden in Abbott's Road had breathed for his father. Like a great beast with its paws tucked up, purring! But not for the son! Let him try to make that garden breathe---let the son try! No! It was only a garden among others for him. One--- on that precious little map of life his school had given him! The trees were group-trees, the leaves and bushes group leaves and bushes! Types, universals---not the breathing presence ~~it~~ itself! Not the only garden in the world!

So he couldn't pass it on. He could only pass on admonitions about life, and advice. Children remembered your being, the way you looked into the garden at dawn, sipping your hot cup of tea... Not your advice.

He thought this with an absolutely sunken spirit, his head down, quite motionless, his breath almost gone.

Pinkie's brother Nigel came over for dinner one evening and they set up a table in the music-room with candles. ~~He~~ Nigel looked worried and kept moving his knee rhythmically under the table. He seemed to feel out of place. Dick wandered in with Hanni and they all sat having a drink. The four of them made gay conversation for Nigel's benefit, exaggerating the closeness between them, but this only seemed to make him feel excluded. He looked robust, with massive shoulders and a bald, weather-beaten brow, with wisps of blond hair, his face still soft and young, his eyes with the usual blazing and selfless curiosity. But this wasn't his circle. He gazed 

<sup>benefit:</sup> Nigel they exaggerated the <sup>closeness</sup> ~~starkness~~ and excitement uniting the four of them, ~~by virtue of Nigel's presence,~~ and only succeeded in making him feel excluded. He <sup>was</sup> still ~~looked~~ very robust-looking, with massive shoulders and a bald, weather-beaten brow, with wisps of blond hair, his face still soft and young, his eyes with the old blazing curiosity and selflessness in them. But this simply wasn't his circle. He gazed

→ at Dick, blinking. He tapped his foot, his eyes strained, and left early. <sup>said</sup> Pinkie/he was ~~very~~ tired these days and had such a lot of work on his hands. He'd found his wife couldn't have children and this was a great blow to him, or so she thought---she'd heard it from one of her sisters. She and Nigel hadn't ragged each other as they usually did when they were together; ~~and~~ they only did it in the country, when they felt really at home. But there <sup>id been</sup> was the intimate glow of respect in her eyes when she looked at him over dinner. <sup>It had made her</sup> When ~~they~~ were together they looked so warm and glowing, as they sat ~~loving~~ at the table, giving an impression of bigness and thriving, healthy flesh; it made the music-room look too small.

Granville was troubled afterwards, wondering what was wrong with the house to make the man feel so <sup>ill-at-ease</sup> ~~out of place~~. He couldn't see things clearly any more, and so he couldn't tell what ~~had been~~ <sup>had been</sup> Nigel's private worry <sup>or</sup> and what ~~had been~~ <sup>had had</sup> the effect of the house. Nigel sent a polite little letter two days later from Wiltshire thanking them for an 'unusual' evening. The music-room had looked fabulous: all its colours <sup>had</sup> stood out vividly against each other, like a tropical garden lit up. <sup>Nigel</sup> Did he mean that? Granville would spend two or three hours in this room in the evening ~~sometimes~~ when there was no one in the house, simply absorbing its brightness and variety: it was <sup>g</sup> ~~beginning~~ to fill up with voices, ~~as~~ <sup>now</sup> that they ~~had~~ had people in night after night; ~~and~~ sometimes he enjoyed it better sitting there and remembering them in silence than actually being with them. The house wasn't weird for him as it had been the first evening.

# → To P. 388

There was a consoling steadiness about Dick that attracted people towards him, especially girls. It was the effect of his self-sufficiency. He didn't need other people: either that was the case or his style was so practised and intelligent that no one could penetrate it. Again and again Granville saw him talking to a girl in the easy, patient and attentive way he'd done with Lucy on the first evening. At

the café sometimes he would watch Dick talking easily with the waitresses, leaning back, his eyes light; <sup>girl</sup> they melted to him because no polite talk <sup>was</sup> or even flirtation were asked of them. He was simple and modest, and

und daunted by the presence of strangers -- stirred on, rather. They didn't have to make a show, and this relieved them. Pinkie said one day that girls invariably felt that old Dick had a right to take them to bed, because he was 'so friendly about it'; he got down to what they were underneath, whereas other men would insist on looking at the 'nice' side of a woman, where she made her 'pact with convention'!

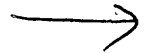
His quiet and simple manner elicited a woman's trust; he created an exclusive relation; the world was an envying spectator -- that was his suggestion.

He left a woman free, so that she didn't feel seduced: he was simply just studying the matter from the pleasure-principle point of view; their interests might be identical in that respect --- why not find out? The first few words were already like kisses; they made kissing seem less of a dramatic step.

It made going to bed anonymous: the girl was taking a holiday from her thinking self. Dick acknowledged that women had desires, and he knew what these were;

Granville began to perceive something in Hanni---that she liked to be thought busy and in demand. She liked to appear suddenly in evening dress saying she'd just been to a first-night, or that she was about to go to 'the most wonderful party'. Sometimes she seemed to enjoy making Pinkie feel left out, which wasn't difficult. "Really?" Pinkie would reply, her mouth drawn down in a sorry way, "I'd have given anything to go to a party tonight!" Yet she may have been to one the night before. The parties she wasn't invited to were always the best ones, and Hanni was aware of her weakness.

But there were also times when Pinkie was invited out and Hanni wasn't, and then she took her revenge, sometimes by asking her round for a drink 'beforehand'---by saying 'beforehand' she aroused Hanni's curiosity. It was a grim feminine game. But slowly they were forming an alliance---"If you can't beat 'em, befriend 'em---" Pinkie told him one day---"is a sound feminine principle!" They would scheme to get each other invited out, and keep a strict balance-sheet to see that not too much credit was given on one side.



to get each other invited. <sup>if you can't see an original copy of Pinkie's letter in the book, then you can find it in the original</sup>

→ If Granville met someone unusual he found he hurried home to tell <sup>Pinkie</sup> her, with the same triumph that Hanni showed when she was called to the telephone <sup>by a stranger</sup>. Pinkie would question him closely, gazing down with a slight compression of her brow as if ~~she was~~ trying to choose in her mind whether to accept or reject what he said. She was like an examiner in the social mysteries--- she could recognise something false at once. Her fundamental question was, "How did you meet them?" Everything hinged on that. And it always turned out that he'd met them through some perfectly ordinary circumstance---at the office when he was with Dick, or sitting in the café with Glenning or ~~Ginger~~; it was always through someone they both knew well---confined to the little group of people she knew <sup>he knew</sup>. It made him feel like a child, offering her things <sup>of small magnitude</sup> ~~that wouldn't impress her~~. He might have met the most fabulous person on earth (from the glittering world Pinkie imagined outside their circle---it was always outside their circle) <sup>but it</sup> ~~though~~ would always have been shown that he'd done so in the most ordinary way; it would have been a chance-contact, and brief, because in himself he hadn't ~~possess~~ position---he could never belong permanently to glittering folk; he hadn't the personal wherewithal to keep up with them. ~~He had style, but that was in himself; there was nothing social about it.~~ She listened to him squeamishly, and when she'd broken his story down to its ordinary elements she showed both relief and disappointment. ~~It seemed that she was relieved~~ <sup>relief</sup> that no fabulous event had taken place without her, and ~~not~~ <sup>never</sup> disappointed that she wouldn't find <sup>a</sup> the key to ~~it~~ <sup>the fabulous</sup> through him. <sup>And</sup> The most <sup>new</sup> spperb <sup>(new)</sup> contact, in any case, even what ~~came through Hanni or Glenning~~, always turned out to be a man in the end not very different from other man! She had a primordial snobbery, not towards a lower <sup>social</sup> class but <sup>towards the universal class of lonely people</sup> to the ~~human creature in loneliness~~. Sometimes when she came in and found him sitting in the bedroom alone, huddled up in an armchair <sup>alone</sup> it might be <sup>alone</sup> without a book, gazing in front of him.

h.p. she made a little gasp and hurried away. Hanni was different.  
~~She had a touch of the more usual snobbery. But she had ~~the~~  
intimate powers as well. When he was alone she would come in and  
talk to him, curling up on the floor, smoking slowly, with movements  
that were at once rigid and graceful. Her dream of the fabulous  
social event had more simple vanity than Pinkie's; <sup>She and Pinkie</sup> ~~the two of them~~  
eagerly discussed new contacts with each other, shutting themselves  
up in the kitchen. He was present at some of these investigations.  
They were harsh and clinical, laying the other person bare, until  
a humourous caricature emerged. It was like clever journalism.  
There was no hint of <sup>the</sup> other person's living presence, only his actions  
and phrases and the farcical situations he got himself into. All  
men were a little funny. Pinkie was always describing them as  
'pompous'. ~~She told him once that he was 'fearfully masculine',  
inferring a rugged strictness -- something crushing and overwhelming.  
Once when he'd asked her if she'd found a certain man in Basrah  
attractive she said quickly, "No! I <sup>only</sup> like queers, really."~~  
~~This didn't coincide with his observations, but he accepted it.~~~~

He began to be careful not to show himself too much, in case  
the others took him for granted. He left the house sometimes when  
he knew that she and Hanni were coming in together, so that he could  
re  
return an hour later and give the impression that he'd been away all  
day. ~~He was annoyed with himself. Why couldn't he stay in his  
chair and let the silly public world pass him by, and live in himself,  
in humility, accepting the frail, lonely flesh, not act in pride all  
the time, seeing himself from the outside? But he couldn't! In  
Basrah he'd done it, and he'd seen other men do it. But the art had  
gone! There wasn't enough life in him. He couldn't get <sup>(continuous</sup> ~~back to his~~~~

He waited for parties and evenings-out ~~for~~ the deadlock of life to be broken; the affection between the four of them welled up in a crowd of people. This was really how their friendship was kept going: it went from one public event to the next! There was always the exciting dressing-up beforehand, when Hanni would arrive from the office with a little attache-case full of her things and take a bath and then start dressing in one of the rooms downstairs, with the gas-fire on. The house would feel warm, and a scent of bath-salts would float into the rooms. Sometimes he would have a drink with her while she pored over her toenails, clipping them and painting them, always talking in her quiet voice, that had such powerful intimacy and steadiness in it, through tight lips, as if her face were a rock. Pinkie would also come down, and they would sit on the floor by the gas-fire, safe in the knowledge that they would be going out as a group, already gay, and so needn't feel nervous of the crowd later. "We always go to good parties," Pinkie said once, "because even when they're bad we make them good!" They were "good" people to invite.

At a party Dick would 'go off', keeping to the side-rooms if there were any, until he'd found a girl. Pinkie would get extravagant and dance recklessly, Hanni would drink quietly at the beginning and dance with style, then go wild at the end of the evening, though never with absolute abandon. Each party was a marvellous landscape with new races of people, and they would catch each other's eyes across this expanse and wave or wink with an intimacy they could never really get alone. In a crowd they were always a family, but free and exciting, gloriously unknown to each other. Dick would slip over to him and confide something, usually about one of the girls: "I say, you see that one with the bald head and the twitch, don't you? I've been trying to shake her off all evening! I thought of giving her your address!" Then he might make his loud, dusty-sounding laugh, like Huh!

But the following day it was always the same as before, with thoughts withheld and the conversation stylised and disjointed. It wasn't that they held things back really---the more intimate the talk, the better: but there had to be a special tone. You couldn't show fear or misgiving. The other person might get

ashamed of you. People who came to the house found them hard and offhand---those who weren't hard and offhand themselves.

Hanni told him why Pinkie had got so peeved with Dick a few weeks before, about him always 'keeping things under his hat'.

"She wanted Dick to do something for Grove at the office," she said quietly. "And he refused."

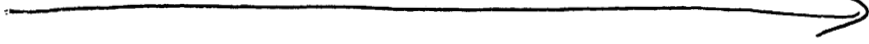
The name ~~she uttered~~ was like a blow, smack in the middle of his face! She spoke steadily---she even said 'Grove' without blinking an eyelid. And he tried to stop the hot trembling that seized every part of his body like a sudden wind. At the same time he knew she was helping him, in a strange way. She was putting out a hand to him but---!

Pinkie had wanted Dick to recommend Grove's firm in some way, she went on, and Dick had refused---of course! (a smile, here)---out of principle! Because Dick just didn't believe the firm was a good one.

What was Grove's firm? He daren't ask her! He sat there smiling and he even found himself asking, "Now which one was Grove?"

His heart was beating at an enormous rate, and he tried to prevent his eyes staring out of his head in a telltale way. The trembling had concentrated itself in his middle, and for some minutes he didn't hear a word she said.

Ah, Grove worked in an advertising firm---he heard that! Here he jumped in---and changed the talk at once with something idiotic about how public-relations was getting a racket these days. He didn't know what he was saying. <sup>But</sup> ~~And~~ she refused to be badged. She went on to say, with the same quiet voice, like a nurse, that Grove worked mostly in the evenings, getting round the clubs, and that his only free evening was Friday.

Friday! He almost fell off his chair and went deathly pale, his lips dry and puffy. 

Friday evenings! He remembered Pinkie's face when she'd told him about the light on the operator's switchboard, she'd blinked quickly. Had she blinked? It was all so ghostly, this putting together of memories! And again he made a quick remark to cover up, though in a terribly <sup>un</sup>steady voice.

He spent the rest of the day trembling, his insides surging up and down, his face flushed, and when Pinkie came in he ~~w~~ouldn't talk to her. But she was used to his by now and put it down to his thinking out ~~x~~ some 'problem'. Gradually over the next few days he got back to normal, with the new information absorbed into the rest of him, to replenish the hidden nerve-war.

He also thought he remembered Hanni saying---but it only came to his consciousness now---that Pinkie's uncle, Lord Maimbury, was giving Grove some help---offering to draw him in as a subsidiary of his own firm, perhaps? Or was that dreaming? Of course! But yet the words were clear before him---out of the shadow~~#~~ of his unheard conversation with Hanni.

A letter came from Mohammed. 'My darling Mr Granville,' it said, 'a woman was murder in the souk yesterday, she has been in my house, my dear, how are you, Mr Tomlinson from Port of Beirut made inspect your office, I give him good tip for the Races outside 7-2, we sweat, my darling, I am your brother, give my humble satisfactions to Mrs Granville, I love you too much, Yours faithfully, Mohammed Hadawi.' He smiled, ~~but~~ it was remote; he didn't trouble to show it to Pinkie. A woman was quite often ~~xxxx~~ murdered in the area of the souk, because that was where the brothels were, along a tiny alleyway guarded by the police. He'd seen Mohammed's signature many times before but it struck him with no familiarity now. The words stuck in his mind---'Mr Tomlinson made inspect your office'.

13

Chapter 13.

*Ans* ~~It~~ <sup>suddenly</sup> occurred to him that this inspection of his office was unusual. *He was ~~intensely~~ frightened.*

Why had it taken place? Did it usually happen when someone was on leave?

*n.p.* He asked Dick and he didn't know. If it was true that he ~~was~~ <sup>was going to</sup> getting the Beirut office it seemed funny that Tomlinson, about to be displaced, should be allowed to inspect his! Or perhaps Tomlinson was being sent to a different theatre of operations altogether? But he'd been in the Middle East ever since the war and was quite an authority: it seemed unlikely!

Or perhaps they were thinking of sending him to <sup>Basrah</sup> ~~Mesul~~, as an exchange with Granville. But he couldn't imagine Tomlinson tolerating that---it would be a severe reduction of rank; he'd met him once or twice and he seemed a capable-enough person, tall, spectacled, rather brisk and sharp. Also he had an Arab wife, from Cairo---not a Christian Arab, either; it helped matters with some of the sheikhs.

*n.p.* He thought of writing to Mohammed about it and asking him what Tomlinson had said. What files had he looked at? Did he have the proper authority? *It's* But it occurred to him that he didn't need authority, since the Beirut office looked after the whole of the Middle East and it was only Tomlinson's kindness and tact that <sup>had</sup> allowed him to assume otherwise. He <sup>was</sup> ~~became~~ troubled. Perhaps they knew---at the London office---what was in his mind about going back to <sup>Basrah</sup> ~~Mesul~~: its unreality for him, and so forth! Perhaps they knew he hadn't booked his passage yet. But how absurd! How on earth could they know? He wrote two or

drafts of a letter to Mohammed, sitting in the bedroom almost a whole day to compose it. Then he screwed it up. Of course it was usual for an unsupervised office to be inspected! He wondered at the unsureness of his thoughts. ~~Such an~~ <sup>were</sup> Inspection <sup>was</sup> even a matter of courtesy. Tomlinson was the nearest English representative to ~~Mosul~~ <sup>Basrah</sup>; ~~And he might have been~~ <sup>held</sup> asked by the London office to fly over and see how things were doing under Mohammed; ~~at~~ <sup>even</sup> he might have done it on his own bat, ~~as the natural thing.~~

h.p. And Dick confirmed this the same evening. He said it was always done. The dark thoughts left Granville and he couldn't imagine how he'd succumbed to them so easily!

He realised next day, in the afternoon, that he hadn't ~~phoned~~ phoned his parents since his return, and that, too, was like waking up from a dream.

~~What had he been doing?~~ He always rang them a few hours after he got back from a visit somewhere---even a visit of a few days inside England.

And now, after two years---! ~~They lived just round the corner, not more than three miles away.~~ ~~What had he been doing, then?~~ How could he

neglect them like this? <sup>e</sup> But the ~~period~~ <sup>hour</sup> had passed like a few hours, in a strange disordered paralysis, sometimes ecstatic, sometimes grim,

going up and down like a ~~frightful~~ dream. He had remembered them, again and again; he'd even been on the point of 'phoning them---his hand had

actually been on the receiver once or twice. But then he'd told himself that the time wasn't ripe, that he wasn't fit to speak to them yet.

He would speak to them when he could bring Abbott's Road clearly to mind, and imagine all the circumstances there with relish. Then he'd be able

to talk to them properly: otherwise he'd be a stranger to them, he wouldn't be able to give them his full attention as their son. It was

a strange idea. But he ~~couldn't~~ <sup>hadn't</sup> phone them, he told himself, ~~while~~ <sup>because</sup> his life was bound and strung down with ropes---in distress---blind!

h.p. Now, however, the time had come. He could see before him better. The optimism that had filled him at the Lido was still there. And he saw in

the future, appearing gradually from the dimness, a face---someone he hadn't yet met---thrilling, and of a light, dazzling mystery he couldn't describe. He couldn't make out the exact features: but every now and then the face, quite alone, in space, would come before him, distant and yet clear, and gaze at him calmly, with a suggestion of sweetness, though there wasn't precisely an expression at all; the face was always still, it never turned aside or looked at anything else; it was even perhaps guarding and watching over him. He had the impression of dark ~~eyes~~ hair and dark, steady eyes, but he wasn't sure if this was an image that had come from his sense of her steadiness or not; for it was a woman. He stood in the music-room thinking about her, this face that gazed at him steadily and with such calm and sweetness, so small and clearly defined, with no ambiguities, and <sup>he</sup> almost stretched out his hand---yet there was no one! The sunlight poured through the window on to the carpet; the house was empty and there was the hushed sound of traffic in the distance; nothing had happened in his life---he had no more friends than before, ~~no more activities; his day was still more or less a waiting for events, filled with rituals, like coffee at eleven and lunch alone in the kitchen over the first edition of one of the evening newspapers, and then tea in the bedroom over a book, which gave the day its form. Nothing had happened,~~ he was in as great an emptiness as before, the rooms and the silence of the house were the same; ~~in fact, his leave was nearly at an end.~~ <sup>not far from the</sup> Yet ~~but~~ he had this sense of fullness---and events preparing themselves! ~~how astonishing it was to have a change of mood! The earth lay quietly there all the time, it didn't change: our bodies remained alone---we lugged them from one place to another, always prisoners in them. One moment we were empty and deprived of future, and then in the next the world was full and warm, we were excited at everything, though we <sup>were</sup> ~~had been doing exactly the same things before!~~~~

In this mood he hurried down the stairs to the second floor and picked

up the ~~phone~~ phone before he could think about it too much, and slowly he dialled his parents' number. ~~Nearly seven weeks and he hadn't called them~~  
 l.c. ~~After an absence of two years!~~ ~~What was in his mind?~~ <sup>And</sup> And as the number rang he had a picture of Abbott's Road for the first time since his return, vivid and quite still, as if the houses were painted, and all at once it seemed impossible to him that he'd managed to live all <sup>these years</sup> ~~this time~~ without Abbott's Road! What a comfort it would be to go there! He imagined the glowing dark cloth on the table, ~~the one~~ with the thick pile, ~~blown or~~ draped, and the soft light that came in from the garden, distilled by the trees and the bushes and wooden fences, and the glittering greenhouses, with the elm-trees that always made a long whispering sound when the wind bent their branches a little. A white cloth would be laid over the thick one about this time, for tea, and the bowl of flowers in the middle, on a lace doily, would be removed to the sideboard. There would be the clink of cups and saucers, and the <sup>rushed</sup> sawing sound as his mother cut the bread, in perfect and equal slices; the clock would tick on the mantelpiece and make its modest little chimes, <sup>that</sup> ~~which~~ always quavered in the silence for a moment afterwards, at every quarter, while the kettle began to hiss in the scullery outside. It was a real place! There was no self down there all the time--only consciousness: ~~only a self~~ <sup>you weren't</sup> ~~wasn't~~ stranded in an area of flesh and bone, but one hour flowed into the next ~~in a way~~ <sup>your</sup> beyond one's body, lost and unwatchful! Yet he'd <sup>been</sup> ~~frightfully~~ lonely down there ~~sometimes~~---more stranded than elsewhere---so ~~dreadfully~~ cut off, in a desert of slate and stone, so silent and melancholy: that was what he feared! ~~most~~ He remembered the deserted years when he was at high school---when sometimes he had to pinch his skin to prove to himself ~~that he was on the~~ <sup>on</sup> earth, and not a pure, floating spirit, never talking, with no one to talk to, without future, lost in a boundless universe!   
 And also there had been the days after he and Kit had separated, before he went into the army, with the same ghost laid on them? These had been

terrible gulfs. Yet Abbott's Road went on, and it always came back with its warm message, however many gulfs you'd suffered there. ~~It~~ It was cut off---but what from? ~~From the world he lived in now.~~ But, more than that, it was cut off essentially, from a life-giving root. It hadn't only been his change, at high school, that had detached him from the streets. There had been something negative to life in them. Yet his childhood still lay there, from very long ago, intact. There was always this great will at work in Abbott's Road, making a new, grotesque, hard countryside out of streets and grimy walls. At one moment it was a bleak and melancholy prison for him, offering no thoughts, no friends, no future for him at all---only its silence of a world cut off; and then, another moment, it was the only place with an intimate glow for him, the only safe place he knew! Whenever this latter moment came he caught his breath---how had he managed to live without it all this time? And that was followed by the other moment, of bleakness, when he saw only the hard, interminable streets and the slate roofs, empty and still. How he yearned to be there at this moment! He would go upstairs to his old room and lie down, peacefully, with the gardens outside, if the old nightmares didn't seize him; he always had to guard against a sort of panic there. One day it might leave him. At any rate, he could talk without thinking there, sitting downstairs with his mother and father, at the table with the heavy cloth, while the clock ticked, with a silence like the countryside ~~from~~ <sup>in</sup> the tiny gardens. One ~~had~~ <sup>could</sup> had to let one's thoughts flow <sup>down</sup> there. ~~Nor did he~~ <sup>didn't</sup> have to pull his face into agreeable expressions! He realised how automatic his control of facial expressions had become over the years, since he left Abbott's Road. When Pinkie walked up the stairs he nearly always tried to undo any frown there might be on his face, and raise his eyebrows a little, lift the corners of his mouth in the suggestion of a smile, in case she gave him a sharp look and asked, "What's the matter with you this evening?" ~~He~~ <sup>he</sup> was the same with Hanni and Dick. No doubt they did the same under his sharp

Wally

n.p.

~~eyes~~ <sup>eyes</sup> So their faces never found their true repose. <sup>Sarah</sup> Mosul had been a wonderful holiday for him in this respect: every face lay in its ~~own~~ <sup>own</sup> repose, stern and glaring, not having reached a consciousness of its ~~own~~ <sup>own</sup> effect <sup>on others</sup>---its importance as a counter in public relations.

His mother came to the <sup>phone</sup> and answered in a soft voice, touched with enquiry, as if from a great distance. The enquiry was slightly worried. "Who's that?"

"It's Philip!"

"Philip? Well, s'help me God!" Her voice was animated at once, and as always she said 's'help-ne-Gord', in one word. "When did you get back?"

"Oh, some time <sup>ago</sup> ~~new~~---God knows what I've been doing efer since---it feels like a few minutes!"

"I wondered when you were going to <sup>phone</sup>! I said to dad this afternoon, I said, he must be home now! Well, s'help me God! Talk of the devil, eh? Well, how've you been keeping?"

"Oh, all right! How are things with you?"

"Well, dad's had a bit of a cold but apart from that things haven't been too bad." She always had a superstitious reserve against saying things had gone very well: he imagined her at the <sup>other</sup> end, ~~of the phone~~ <sup>of the phone</sup>, plump and slightly flushed in her cheeks, with eyes a little pinched with worry. Her voice was always soft and passive-sounding over the <sup>phone</sup>, and she seemed to be gazing at things from a safe vantage-point, ~~very~~ coolly and remotely, in a place where she wasn't likely to be noticed, and with a certain sadness, as if an enormous pageant was passing her by.

"Is <sup>d</sup> ~~R~~ Dad still getting out in the garden?"

"Oh, yes, trust him!" She paused a moment, waiting for him to speak. There was always this effort at first, to reach the other ~~world~~ <sup>world</sup>. The language was so different. Then slowly he would begin to feel at ease: he would feel all the struggles in his mind, its sharp girders and struts, falling, while he laid himself open with a pained, unwilling relief.

~~It only made him feel the chasm in his life worse afterwards, but it was~~

→ n.p. ~~a relief~~ [ She spoke again: "How's Pinkie doing, all right?"

"Oh, yes, she's fine! She's going out to work again now, you know."

"Go on, is she really? What, in the same job?"

"Yes, she thought she'd had enough of sitting round doing nothing!"

"Did she?" his mother asked. "Why---" she chuckled, "did she do a lot of that out there, then?"

"Well, there was plenty of work, on e way and another, but we had somebody to do the cleaning and everything."

"Yes, I remember you saying in a letter you had plenty of help in the house." So she's gone back to the office, has she? Some people don't know when they're lucky, do they?" she added with a laugh.

J

"Have you been sleeping all right?" he asked. ~~She was a bad sleeper, whereas his father went off the moment his head touched the pillow--or so family legend had it; and he had a deafening snore.~~

"Oh, the same as usual---I've never been famous for sleeping, have I?" He could imagine her smiling at this moment, with a quick intelligent glance after it. "I drink a glass of stout last thing at night---the doctor said it might do me some good, but it doesn't seem to make any difference."

She paused. "Pinkie came back with you, did she?"

That was one of her divining questions: <sup>these</sup> they were mostly rhetorical, because for some reason she knew the truth already.

His voice faltered, and he hoped it wasn't noticed. "No, she came beforehand."

"Oh, yes? I expect she had the house to get ready and all that sort of thing, did she?"

"Yes, there were dust-covers all over the furniture, and she had to air the sheets and everything!" He said the first words that came into his head, quite panic-stricken for a moment.

"Did she, really? I thought you let the place out!"

"No, we gave the key to Pinkie's brother, don't you remember? And he used it when he wanted to?" He felt an impatience familiar from his childhood of not being understood quickly enough---as the two worlds in which he'd lived had grown further apart. ~~Most of it had gone now. But sometimes it came back into his voice, and his mother would make a little start as if they were in the same conflicts.~~

"Oh, yes," she said, "that's right", in the slightly hurried way she ~~always~~ had when <sup>she felt</sup> there'd been a gulf of <sup>some</sup> ~~this~~ kind. "I remember now." Then she added in a more direct voice, some of its pleasantry gone, "I would've liked young Pinkie to come over for dad's birthday. We gave him ever such a nice party!"

"Good God, was it his ~~bir~~irthday?" *Caught!*

"Yes---oh, go on, I tell you once a year and you never remember!" I think we'd drop through the floor if we ever got a birthday-card from you, let alone a present! We'd fade out!"

"I'll try and remember next year!" he said with a laugh. Birthdays were a long-standing joke between them, another family-legend: his sister forgot them as well, and his mother would always mention <sup>them</sup> a week or so after they'd passed, <sup>in a soft voice</sup>. <sup>why did a</sup> A year always seemed such a frightfully short time? ?

"Yes," she replied, "try is about all you will do, I expect---but as to sending us a simple card, well, as I said to dad the other day, it's never happened yet and there's no reason to think it <sup>ever</sup> will! ~~in the future,~~ either!"

"When's your birthday, then?" he asked with another laugh, but abashed.

"Well, if you promise to keep it a secret it's <sup>September</sup> ~~July~~ 15th---"

"But that's quite soon!"

"Don't you worry about that, old son, it's long enough for you to forget all about it and <sup>then</sup> swear black's white I never told you!"

"Well, was it a nice party?"

She chuckled. "Well, thanks for your interest!" Then she was serious again. "Oh, it was really nice, Philip! You know, I think people really enjoyed themselves. It isn't often you can say that, is it?" She seemed to narrow her eyes thoughtfully, and a strange sophistication came over her, of an inherited kind, with nothing deliberate about it. "Of course, you can never really tell, can you, when you're running round with sandwiches and cups of tea and that sort of thing, looking after everybody? We had ever such a lovely cake---I went round to Hemmings and ordered it the week before. I thought, well, they're just as good as making it yourself, and you don't have all that bother with getting all the ingredients and mixing and all that nuisance. I don't mind doing it at Christmas time but what with getting the drink in as well and, you know, little presents for dad, I thought, oh, blow it, I'll go down to Hemmings and see if I can get one ~~in~~<sup>an</sup> order! And, you'd be surprised, that cake was one of the best I've ever tasted. It was lovely! Well, people came up to me and said, this is a lovely cake you've made, Mrs Granville---so it just shows you, doesn't it? Sometimes you take a chance and they let you down, then at others you strike lucky!" She laughed softly. "They kept on asking what I'd put in it and all that sort of thing. Of course, I never said anything. I thought, well, if you want to think it, think it---I'm not saying anything! I thought, I'm the only one who knows where I got it, so why worry?"

"You haven't got a bit left for me, have you?"

"Well, I saved a couple of pieces for you and Pinkie, not that you <sup>e</sup>~~d~~serve it, thought!"

"How old was dad---sixty-four this time?"

"Sixty-five. I thought, oh well, we'll give the poor old bugger a party!"

"Did he enjoy it?"

"Did he? Trust him! He got soused and couldn't roll his r's as

*pet*  
usual! I think he had a better time than anybody else! Well, he never  
*it's* was slow at having a good time, was he?"

"What about you, when's your sixty-fifth coming up, is it next time?"

"Oh, don't say that, son! I've got two <sup>more</sup> years <sup>to run</sup> yet! But I don't suppose anybody'll give me a party. Some people wondered why we made such a fuss about him being sixty-five, but I thought, well, we didn't do anything when he was sixty, or when I was sixty for that matter, so why not? I think you need a good party now and then, don't you? It sort of loosens you up!"

"Yes!"

"I'm sixty-three in September. It makes you think, doesn't it? Time doesn't stand still!"

"I always think of you as about sixty all the time---both of you!"

"Well, I wish we could stay there, old son, but we can't, can we? It's all right when you're young, but when you get to our ripe old age the years start running like little rabbits." It doesn't seem two years since you and Pinkie went out there, does it?" She paused. "Well, Philip, how do things suit you out there?"

"Oh, quite well!"

"Is the work interesting?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I expect you've had some interesting experiences all round, haven't you?"

"Lots, yes! It's a very nice atmosphere <sup>out</sup> there---you know, in the office---"

"Is it really? Well, that's the main thing, isn't it, if you've got nice people round you in your work?"

"Yes! I've got a very good assistant. I don't know what I'd do without him!"

"Go on! He's a real good worker, is he?"

"Yes. He's an Arab."

"Is he really? Well, that's really lucky, isn't it? You can never tell what sort of person you're going to get, can you, especially if you're a foreigner?"

"No. I might have got a completely dishonest person, and not knowing the language it <sup>might</sup> ~~would probably~~ have taken me ~~about~~ a year to find out, suppose he was fiddling the accounts or something like that."

"That's right! Then you'd have to take the buck back yourself, wouldn't you?"

"Yes!"

"And there's another thing, when you go away and leave the office you do know you're leaving it in good hands, don't you?"

"Oh, I could go off for three months and not worry---well, it'll be two months when I get back this time!"

n.p. "Well, I bet there's not many people in business who can say that, is there, especially abroad like that?" He was <sup>afraid</sup> ~~scared~~ she would ask when his leave would be over. "In a week or so---he couldn't bear to say it! But she said nothing."

"He saved me from a riot once," he went on, talking about Mohammed.

"Go on, did he, really? What, were you in the middle of it or something?"

"Well, I was in a hotel, and they were throwing bricks through the window."

"Go on!"

"And he walked right through it all and took me out to his car, and they didn't say a word?"

"Didn't they, really? Well, it just shows you, doesn't it? Goodness gracious me! I dare say they had a respect for him, didn't they, and thought, well, any friend of his is a friend of mine, sort of thing?"

"Yes, that's right. Anyway, they didn't try and throw any bricks at me!"

"Still, it's a nasty experience, isn't it? Do they get real wild, then?"

"Oh, yes, they scream and cry when their blood's up---you know, when there's a real riot."

"No, do they, really?"

"I saw a young chap with tears pouring down his face---he was shouting about the government or something! You ought to have seen him!"

"Go on! They get so worked up they don't know what they're doing any more, I suppose?"

"That's right!"

"I expect you felt damned lucky to get out of it alive, didn't you? A jolly good thing this Arab was decent, wasn't <sup>e</sup>it? Did he know you were there, then, or did he come in by accident?"

"No, he knew I was there because I left the office about an hour before to see a client, and I told him where I was going. So when I didn't turn up he put two and two together."

"Well, s'help me God! There aren't many like him, are there?"

"No! Of course, everybody knows when there's going to be a riot. Usually, anyway. They always go on round the colleges."

"Do they, really? What, the students?"

"Yes, that's right."

"Oh, and this time they thought they'd have a go at one of the hotels, did they? I don't know! Of course, it would be just when you're in there, wouldn't it?"

"Well, mostly English and American people stay there, so they thought it was a good place to throw bricks at, I suppose."

"Why, did they want to get hasty with the English, ~~and Americans~~, then? I suppose if the truth was <sup>o</sup>told they <sup>e</sup>got so frantic they <sup>don't</sup> didn't know what they wanted to do!"

"Well, it's little wonder they riot, really, considering the way

they're treated."

"Why, aren't they treated right, then?"

"Well, most of the people are half-starved. And you ought to see the money the rich ones throw away!"

"Go on! It's pure greed, is it? Well, those people deserve what they get, don't they? And I suppose they think you're in with them, do they?" ~~You know, the English and Americans~~

"Yes. But I don't think they'd touch a foreigner, <sup>really.</sup> It's funny, isn't it? They'll set on their own policeman, but I bet if I walked out into the street they might jeer at me, but they wouldn't hurt me!"

9  
Ital

"Go on? ~~They've got some respect, I suppose.~~ I expect they think, well, he might be bad, but he's not as bad as our lot! And from the sound of it they're not far short of the truth, are they?"

"No! You ought to see how some of the rich ones behave. Sometimes they won't let the poor have a doctor, even if they know they're dying. They say they don't want the doctor to get his hands dirty!"

"No! Well, that's just wicked, isn't it? I don't know, some people are the limit, aren't they? Fancy that! Not letting a man have a doctor if he's dying!" And she added, "Oh, well they'll get their reward. They don't do things in this country that they used to do, do they? The people saw to that. We don't stand for things like we did in the old days. Well, they say you can take a horse to the water but you can't make him drink, don't they?"

"Yes!"

There was a bustle at the other end, and she said with a laugh, "Watch out for it, Philip---it's just come in from the garden! Old Nosey!"

"What, dad?"

Ital

"Yes!" There was some murmuring at the other end, and he heard his mother say <sup>in a joking way,</sup> ~~in a joking way,~~ "All right, don't push, you'll get there!"

Here's your dad, hold on a minute, Philip!"

She moved away from the phone and he heard her shout playfully, "Why the hell don't you wash your hands when you come in from the garden? Look what you're doing to that phone!"

His father answered in an elated way, between his teeth, "Go on, you're always on the grouse!" Then he bellowed into the phone, "Hallo, Philip! How's things?"

"Oh, all right! How are you keeping?"

"Not too bad! Mustn't grumble! Your mother's always on at me, of course! She never gives the old man a minute's peace!" He heard his mother say in her rich way, in the background, "Yes, that's right!", and laugh. His father went on, "Well, when are we going to see you, son?"

"Some time this week, I thought. I'll fix something up with mum."

"That's right. How's Pinkie, all right?"

"She's fine. I was telling mum, she's gone back to the office."

"Has she really? What's the matter with her, dopy? Does she like work or something?"

"She seems to, doesn't she? Are you still getting out in the garden?"

"Oh, yes! I've just been doing some watering down in the green-house. Couldn't get down there last week, I had a bit of a cold."

His mother again said something in the background---"Oh, go on, don't make such a damned fuss about a snuffle! Anybody'd think you had pneumonia the way you carry on!"

"Hear what she <sup>says,</sup> ~~says,~~ Philip? She leads me a hell of a dance! Anyway, I just brought in some nice chrysanthus, and the gladioli came out nice this year. Tell Pinkie I've got some nice bulbs for her to take."

"Oh, good!"

"Well, how are things over there, son? Are you doing all right?"

"Not too bad. I've just been telling mum, the work's very interest-

ing."

"Oh, well, that's the main thing, isn't it? How does Pinkie keep out there, all right?"

"Oh, yes!"

"That's good." We'd like to see you." And he added politely, as if he'd made a blunder, "Both of you." Granville could imagine him with rather a puzzled expression, blinking, trying to see things properly. His mother was always talking about his blunders of tact. And often, as in this case, there hadn't been one.

"I expect it gets nice and hot out there, doesn't it?" his father asked.

"Yes, it certainly does! The sweat pours down your back in the summer. It's like leaning against a wet towel all the time!"

"Go on, is it really?"

"There's nothing you can do except sit downstairs in a kind of cellar all day, and even there it's boiling!"

"God love old Ireland!" his father exclaimed softly. ~~It was like his mother's 'help me God', said as one word, uttered in the same softly astonished way. It made Ireland sound a fabulous country, for some reason huge and sparsely like a hussious green field stretching as far as the sea.~~ <sup>flat</sup> <sup>legendary</sup>

"I expect it gets you down sometimes, doesn't it?" his father added.

"Yes!" Then he said, "I hear they gave you a good birthday party?"

"That's right! I got as tight as a fiddler's bitch, so they told me! We didn't half have a lovely time! Quite a crowd there was, too! Mum got a beautiful cake down the road---"

His mother said something, and his father laughed---"She don't like it when I tell the truth! Mustn't tell the truth, oh no! You're supposed to say she made the cake when you damned-well/<sup>know</sup> she didn't! Love old Ireland, you ought to have heard the lies about that cake! Your dad

nearly put his foot in it, though! She had to give me a kick in the shins!" He added, "Still, she put the icing on. That's all she could do for the poor old bug! They get lazy in their old age, son!"

"That's right!"

"Well, mum wants to talk to you again. So we'll be seeing you shortly, then?"

"Yes, that's right, I'll fix it up with mum."

"Good boy! Cheerio, then! Give my love to Pinkie!"

"I will! See you soon!"

~~xxx~~ When his mother came to the phone she said softly, "He's a proper gas-bag, that man, isn't he? And he's never got anything to say!" She chukled. "Except when he can put his foot in it. You ought to have heard <sup>him</sup> leading off about this cake at the party, telling everybody where I got it, I could have killed him! And there was I keeping quiet about it!"

~~"Still, he got enough to drink, that's the main thing, isn't it?"~~

~~"Well, he had his fair share, son, you can take it from me! I don't know, it <sup>only needs a sip of something</sup> does ~~not~~ take anything to make him ~~so~~ soppy! I think if he'd had ginger wine he ~~would~~ have been the same!"~~

~~"Oh, he's still ~~the same~~ like that, is he?"~~

~~"Oh, yes! Still, he's not ~~such a~~ a drinker, I'll say that. <sup>Not</sup> compared to some of them." He likes his pint now and then but he never goes down the road any more on Sundays like he used to---you know, not unless there's a crowd of us and it's Christmas-time or something!"~~

~~"Do you still go down the Co-op?"~~

~~"Oh, yes, we still have a social once a week."~~

~~"Where do they hold it now?"~~

~~"Oh, up at Tatlin Broadway, or down the road in the parish hall sometimes. Do you remember when we used to have down at your school?"~~

~~"Yes!" <sup>He remembered how</sup> This was the school that had been bombed. The buffet would be laid out in one of the class-rooms, and his mother sometimes had charge~~

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l.c.

The buffet

of the catering. He could remember the tall jugs of lemonade on the teacher's desk, and the rows of ham sandwiches. He used to swing on the bars in the dark cloak-room while the dance was going on, or creep into the top class-room where his own desk was, wondering at the mystery of being there alone when there were no lessons, in half-darkness, sole inhabitant of this ~~wonderful~~ <sup>strange</sup> little territory with its crayon drawings on the wall and maps and rows of desks, and the blackboard with sums all over it, and the windows that pulled down with a ~~cord~~ <sup>cord;</sup> it made him a kind of owner---he could pick up the books on his teacher's desk, and touch the class-lists that were pinned behind it. When they got home, about eleven, his mother would unwrap two or three <sup>some</sup> pounds of sausages, and <sup>these</sup> they would sizzle ~~sizzle~~ with tomatoes in the scullery for the next half-hour, while his father put his slippers on and the cloth was laid, and his mother totted up the takings for the evening in her catering-book. He remembered his shudders of ~~elation~~ <sup>elation</sup> on Saturday afternoons when they were sitting in the cinema at Tatlin Broadway, when he thought, "It's Social-night tonight!", in the darkness. How extraordinary those shudders were, <sup>in childhood;</sup> like being touched from beyond life; then they died out, after childhood, and never came again.

→ "Well, when are we going to see you?" <sup>she added.</sup> his mother asked.

"Why don't you come over for tea first of all, and then we'll make a date to come over and see you. What about that?"

"It's all right by me. What's Pinkie <sup>got</sup> going to say about it?"

"Oh, she asked me to <sup>fix something</sup> make an arrangement with you."

They arranged a day for the next week, <sup>then his mother said in</sup> ~~and the conversation was over~~

a quiet voice, "I suppose I ought to have given Pinkie a ring about dad's party, didn't I?"

It was in her wondering voice <sup>again</sup> when she was trying to find out something but wasn't clear herself what it was. Perhaps she knew more than he did. There was some regret in her voice. ~~The question meant she was~~

*J* But he'd told her nothing. Perhaps she'd rung up before he got back and been answered by a man's voice. Or perhaps her simple powers of divination were enough, without the full facts.

→ "Yes, you should have done," he replied, with the sense of surrendering a secret. "She'd have loved it." *She was here a month before me!*

*J* "Oh, so she was there some time before you got back, was she?"

"Oh, yes, she came back about a month before."

There was a slight pause, then his mother said, "What a silly I was, then, I ought to have phoned up, didn't I?" She spoke slowly, as if to herself. And she added, "Well, give her my love when she comes in, won't you? ~~And tell her I'd have liked to hear from her.~~ Shall I bring what's left of the cake over when we come?"

"Oh, yes, would you?"

"All right, then. It'll make the old man think he's having another birthday party, won't it?"

*Frankie said goodby.*  
~~They laughed, and there the conversation ended.~~ He walked <sup>To P. 415(a)</sup> a way from the phone in a new spirit. ~~How different~~ <sup>different</sup> Everything looked ~~different~~ ---the walls by the staircase, the carpet with a strip of sunlight falling across it, the colours of the music-room, so sharp and varied! He was astonished that all the darkness could leave him in this way, after a few moments on the 'phone. ~~It had made an extraordinary difference.~~ He felt clean and disburdened, and the thoughts were no longer crossing and fighting in his head. ~~Everything in his body was functioning right, and he had the same~~ <sup>sense</sup> of health and a flow of good life through him, without interruption or conflict. *ital* He went upstairs to the kitchen and made himself a cup of tea, contented, quite lost, gazing before him. ~~He'd really talked to someone,~~ <sup>from himself</sup> perhaps that was the difference!

There was a quiet regard between his parents and Pinkle. ~~There was~~ <sup>She had</sup> nothing small about her---that was what impressed them most. She was scatter-brained and untidy, not very good about the house, and perhaps she

Then they said goodbye. As he walked away from the phone he had a sudden warm, tingling image of the Abbott's Road school on Saturday evenings, at the Socials. He could remember the tall jugs of lemonade on the teacher's desk, and the rows of ham sandwiches. He used to swing on the bars in the dark cloakroom while the dance was going on, or creep into the top classroom where his own desk was, silent and dark and mysterious, with crayon drawings clustered on the wall, and strange white signs on the blackboard, and maps and rows of untenanted desks, and windows that pulled down with a cord and made a clang. When they got home, about eleven, his mother would unwrap some sausages and these would sizzle with tomatoes in the scullery for the next half-hour, while his father put his slippers on and the cloth was laid, and his mother totted up the takings for the evening in her catering book. He remembered<sup>e</sup> his shudders of elation on Saturday afternoons when they were sitting in the cinema at Tatlin Broadway---when he thought to himself, "It's Social night tonight!", in the darkness. How extraordinary those shudders were, in childhood; then they died out!

He felt clean and disburdened, and thoughts were no longer crossing and fighting in his head. He went upstairs and made himself a cup of tea, contented, gazing before him.

Once his mother had told him that Pinkie reminded her of aunt May, in the lavish, golden style she had, in her slapdash generosity. There was something in their voices, too, that was similar---not the tone exactly, but a richness that couldn't be described, as if it came from past generations, like a song with a great ancient depth in it; they had sing-song voices, floating up and down, far beyond people.

~~His mother believed in the 'higher world' much as he had done once. They were all delicate, fastidious, happy people up there; they never knew trouble or anything problematic in life! She was always astonished if she heard of a rich person having a handicap of some kind---say, a paralysis. There was a timidly hopeful dream that money cured everything. In the higher world there were rich people with cars and servants, and aristocrats, and 'top society'. It was all intact. Pinkie, by virtue of her connections---wasn't her uncle a lord?---was already included in that polite, smooth, deathless world for her. All Pinkie had to do, surely, was to ask, and one of these lords, living it up in the clubs of London, taking flights all over the world, with butlers, footmen, maids, tenants and obedient flunkies everywhere, would hand something out---"Give the girl a thousand a year and tell her to keep the change!" When he spoke about Nigel's house in Wiltshire she saw a palace where he also was treated like a lord: "Here, boy, take Mr Granville's trunk and give him thirty pounds from my cash-box to see him through the afternoon! Send over <sup>to</sup> Lord Muck and tell him to come to tea ~~taxmexxmyxbratherxinxlavixx~~ because my brother-in-law's here!"---(pronounced heah!). The labour party, to keep its old platform, encouraged the idea that the old status quo was intact, and the fact that a different world had come into being with no rank in the old sense was knowledge only among the young.~~

When Pinkie came back that evening he told he'd phoned his parents. And she said non-committally, "Oh, good!"

~~action.~~ Before, all the time they'd been in Basrah, she'd been tremulously aware of people; ~~there had nearly always been a flush of excited life in her in the evening.~~ But now she <sup>seemed</sup> ~~was~~ flat. ~~Again~~ It struck him that <sup>this</sup> ~~it~~ must be the office. Her life required no effort: ~~there was only the work.~~ But, on the other hand, she looked more peaceful than before, ~~and~~ less sensitive to every little change in the outside world; his glances and moods were of less importance to her. ~~She needed this rest from constantly comparing herself with other people and feeling bare to life, as she had in Basrah, and from always feeling wrong, from yearning to be some- where else all the time, or, <sup>to be other than she was.</sup> somebody else.~~ She needed to be taken for granted again, as she was at the office, and to have the security of the same faces every day. So he was willing to keep quiet; she gave him his freedom, too.

<sup>Their</sup> His sex was disordered <sup>in a new way:</sup> it had something to do with their life, <sup>together</sup> ~~with~~ this city---not with either of them in themselves. ~~It was more ~~this~~ an extension of masturbation than an outward act.~~ ~~It didn't go right down to his centre of being, but remained on the surface.~~ In an orgasm he rarely had the sensation of releasing everything---only the surface-evacuation required by the friction of sex, not a spasm of his whole being. ~~He was aware of this by contrast with the times when they had moved together and achieved a <sup>in which</sup> climax that made the whole of their being shudder.~~ In Basrah it had been better. Sex had been more distinct from the sentiments and courtesies of life than here; it had a raw, ~~desert~~ quality, like the hard sun on the miles of <sup>desert</sup> sand outside, static and unyielding. But <sup>there</sup> ~~there~~, although the air buzzed with sex, and there were preparatory comings and goings all the time, and escapades, some hidden damage, <sup>had been</sup> ~~was~~ done, and the flow of life in this respect, as in all others, was interrupted. Just as there was a great system outside in the streets, throbbing and moving all the time, so a system took hold of one's sex; ~~and the sky was shut out.~~ sex was no longer the intimate glimpse into darkness and mystery, the only

one vouchsafed in life; one wasn't engulfed---it was a civic ejaculation! They hardly cried out in the orgasm; the sound was more like the rush of breath from exhaustion, a kind of cough, as if they were being wracked, at one remove from the real thing.

In the evening after he'd ~~phoned~~ phoned his parents they sat together for a change, and no one called. The house was pleasantly quiet and he was glad to have her alone with him, sitting opposite him at the hearth, reading the paper. A car would pass in the street outside, hushed, making the roadway crackle slightly, or someone would walk by with quick steps in the silence of the evening, while Pinkie rustled her paper, her legs stretched out. He sat there gazing before him, watching the dusk grow, quite at peace. It rarely happened these days that someone didn't call. They made coffee as they'd always done in Basrah, sitting in the kitchen to drink it. They hardly talked to each other. Their going to bed was always a comfort. It always cancelled out what had happened during the day. A peculiar intimacy they could never capture during the day flowed back into them. She was more or less a stranger to him, <sup>how,</sup> he couldn't read the thoughts in her face, but he crooked his leg over hers in the same way every night, and put his arm round her waist, in a dumb, blind, automatic way, while she crooked her legs up too, and all reserve left her; then they <sup>a</sup> ~~sunk~~ into sleep, joined together in a strange, black, dusty region where there was no touch or noise. It made them both calm at once, as if their bodies were independent of themselves, and only their minds made the terrible interruptions.

The performance of 'Hamlet' to which he invited Hanni and Dick produced a first-class row between the four of them. A peculiar coldness came over Dick during the first act and he began criticising everything in a crisp, academic way that annoyed the others. His voice

broke slightly as he talked, with suppressed irritation. Hanni said he was often like this when he was given a treat: he reacted 'agin'. But Pinkie said afterwards that there'd been some friction between them because it was one of Dick's 'evenings-out' periods, when he had the right not to return to Hampton Court if he didn't want to, and the invitation had cut across this. At first he'd told Hanni over the phone, "I'm sorry and all that but I just can't ~~xxxxxxx~~ come"; <sup>that</sup> Hanni ~~had~~ <sup>she'd</sup> insisted, ~~however~~ because Granville was going away so soon, and ~~had~~ taken his wallet out of his jacket in the morning, leaving him with just enough money to get to the office.

after work

Then she'd met him ~~at the office~~ and dragged him along to the theatre.'

There was a glittering upstairs-foyer where they <sup>sat</sup> ~~start~~ talking; that was where <sup>the row</sup> ~~it~~ started. And it didn't explode into anything direct, much less loud, but went on all evening in an underground way, as if they were all talking about something much more intimate than a theatre-performance, though they couldn't name it or even talk about it directly; there had to be a surface-language for it. None of them had ~~been~~ eaten and that made the atmosphere worse. Pinkie had a strained, pale face, and Hanni's lips were tight-closed. Pinkie enjoyed the performance and said so: there was plenty of scenery, she said, and plenty of 'odd noises off', instead of all the 'barebones' productions you were dished up withowadays, with a bit of 'twisted iron' representing a throne and 'a trill on <sup>the</sup> a clarinet' for the forest of Arden. The actor de Cloud wasn't up to much, she said, but you could hear what he said and he had a respect for the verse, which was also rare these days. She said it in a rather rasping way, clattering out her words, her chin lifted with a show of self-confidence, and perhaps this annoyed Dick. She knew 'Hamlet' more or less by heart, and said she'd read it, like most of the other tragedies, a score or so times before she was sixteen. Shakespeare and animals had been her childhood passions. Dick also fancied himself on Shakespeare, from a more academic angle. And he challenged her.

"I don't think he's got a respect for the verse at all," he said.

"Oh, and what---?" Pinkie began.

Dick cut her short with a brief, devastating glance, his lips making a strange little shiver before he spoke, "It's not what I think, <sup>either!</sup> It's what I can prove."

That started it. It wasn't at all like Dick to say this sort of thing, and the others at once assumed, ~~by the way they behaved,~~ that he was looking for a row ~~without worrying much about the pretext.~~ Pinkie made a grim, unsteady guffaw, and cried, "Really!"

Granville's temper was up because of the tone Dick had taken.<sup>1</sup> He didn't think de Cloud was as bad as all that, he said---there was nothing clever or fancy about him, anyway.<sup>2</sup> This was in the interval and the bell went before Dick could say any more.<sup>3</sup> They walked back to their seats in the circle in a grim file---more or less in the order of their indignation, Dick first, his lips white, then Pinkie, her head lowered in the prowling way she had when she ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> on the defensive, <sup>then</sup> and Granville followed by Hanni, who was the calmest of them all.<sup>4</sup> The moment the curtain went down at the end of the play Pinkie turned round to Dick as if there'd been no interruption in what they'd said and asked in a loud voice, "Well, what have you got on your mind, if you can put it in a decent way, that is?" It was in ~~what Dick sometimes called~~ her 'patrician' tone, when she gazed at a point to one side of the other person or at his foot, her lips pouting.<sup>5</sup> Dick sat looking firm but not a little scared: for a moment they were like two children with a lovable power of intimacy as they sat side by side, their faces small and refined, their eyes with the same light-blue transparency, flickering and sensitive, terribly aware of every little change in the other person.<sup>6</sup> ~~One of the other two~~ <sup>Hanni & Granville</sup> could have stopped the quarrel <sup>at any moment</sup> by saying something pleasant, but they left ~~Dick and Pinkie~~ <sup>the others</sup> alone in the field.<sup>7</sup> There was a grim intimacy between Dick and Pinkie that was baffling---which was perhaps why they didn't interfere.<sup>8</sup> They stuck at each other as if settling another score.<sup>9</sup> The rest of the audience trickled out of the circle, leaving them sitting alone, until the house-lights went down and an usher asked them to go. The usher spoke without ceremony and this nettled Pinkie further. She was about to answer back and cause a scene when Dick said quietly, "Now, then, take it easy!"<sup>10</sup>

Dick said he'd heard <sup>Hamlet say</sup> 'enseamed' as a word of two syllables when it should have <sup>had been</sup> ~~three~~ and also 'precedent' had been pronounced the modern way, whereas the emphasis should <sup>have been</sup> be on the middle syllable.<sup>11</sup> He <sup>also</sup> disliked the way de Cloud emphasised 'master' in 'master the devil' in Hamlet's third

speech from the end. The argument went on at home in Chaworth Road, in the music-room; Hanni and Dick came back by habit---the argument gripped them all together so much that parting was unthinkable. No one mentioned that the last train to Hampton Court had gone. It was quite usual now for them to stay the night, together ~~or~~ alone.

"I mean," Dick said, "look at the way that fellow talked to the players, flinging his arms about! He did everything he was telling them not to do!" Then he added, "It just didn't come off!"

And Pinkie ~~would~~ brush <sup>ed</sup> aside everything he said like a fly. He was amazed at her confidence. "It came off for me all right!" she cried. "'Come off'! What do you think he was trying to do---sell you something?"

~~This was the impression Dick gave, when he talked, that everything had been done on the stage to catch his interest or praise in some way: it was all gestures and signs, which he criticised. His tone was the same as when he talked about himself judiciously. He was watching from afar, his leg crooked, an absent expression on his face as if he'd deliberately shorn <sup>himself</sup> it of all feeling, to leave <sup>the mind</sup> it free for cool observation. And he talked softly, keeping his voice down with an effort; and yet the effort was also part of his character, seeming natural and spontaneous to him.~~

Pinkie was mocking him, really. She sat there smiling, though defensively, with a little flickering of her eyes, her chin moving up and down. She gazed across the room at him with narrowed, disbelieving eyes, as if everything he said was a cheap and obvious little ruse. The atmosphere got worse and worse. The more she cracked the performance up the more Dick picked on a little error of text---if it was an error, for no one could remember exactly what had gone on. He spoke crisply, holding back, quite still in his chair, gazing across at the open window where Pinkie and Granville were sitting together on the divan. And Hanni ~~spoke in~~ <sup>→</sup> much the same style, though she disagreed with him. Her lips hardly moved, and her eyes were fixed as she talked, and it seemed as if she was making

the same effort at cool and judicious observation, though it wasn't natural to her. She would say without the slightest note of interest in her voice, like someone in a government-office putting out a statement.

"I thought Hamlet's soliloquy at the graveyard was well-done, didn't you?" or "The décor for the play-within-the-play was clever, don't you think so?"

n.p. Pinkie gave the impression that she'd actually enjoyed the play, in herself, and so could lean back on the divan and talk as casually as she wanted, because all she had to do was to remember what her feelings had been; she didn't choose her words as Dick and Hanni did, they had a natural and flowing sound, and one could tell exactly from them what her state of heart had been during the performance. But Dick and Hanni conveyed no sense of themselves; it was impossible to say what it would have felt like to be them during the performance. Their words didn't convey the feeling of the theatre as Pinkie's did, or what it had been like to watch the vivid, glowing lights of the stage from the darkness. When Pinkie talked one could imagine being at the play again, and actually being inside it---inside the actions and story, as if they'd been one's own life. When she said 'Hamlet' it seemed that she was talking about a real person; and the quarrel between Hamlet and his mother seemed close and intimate to her, for some reason. It was clearly her at the play, talking from what her own feelings had been without reference to opinions or what other people might expect of her; what she said about the play was a description of herself. So she was perfectly at ease, and leaned back watching Dick as he chose his words, chuckling. Both he and Hanni gave the impression of a kind of objective mechanism that had seen the play---remaining still while the performance tired to work its charms on them, ~~as they with their own lives.~~ They might be judging a performance for public and official purposes---say, for a possible subsidised performance, <sup>which must be selected to represent</sup> ~~that would have to comprise~~ the most expert talent in the country; a matter to be judged fairly, without prejudice. There was even a feeling of vocation behind it. They were

Underneath the argument there was something implacable involving all of them. 'Hamlet' was only the occasion. All the unresolved elements in their friendship welled up in the <sup>argument,</sup> ~~silence,~~ <sup>but</sup> indicated in a tone of voice or a ~~bitterly~~ <sup>only</sup> hostile glance, like ghosts <sup>walking</sup> between them.

n.b.  
 The argument  
 was  
 about  
 the  
 argument

The silence was full of things that hadn't been said in the last few weeks, with the strange comings and goings in the house. What did Dick know about Pinkie's doings, on Friday evenings for instance? That question occurred to Granville. Why was there this intimate struggle of hatred between Dick and Pinkie? What went on in Hanni's mind? What did she do on the nights Dick went out---did she have lovers as well? What did she know about Pinkie which she didn't pass on to Granville? What did Pinkie know about Hanni which she didn't pass on to Dick? What sort of friend was Dick---this occurred to him like a stab ~~in his middle~~ <sup>in his middle---</sup> to tell him nothing, never to put out his hand to help---to see the marriage going down before his eyes---to see him falling from blindness to blindness---knowing what Pinkie was doing---seeing what he was hiding from himself---but what was Pinkie doing?

Itals

Itals

All these thoughts jostled about and fought in his brain while the talk went on about Hamlet. Were the others doing the same? Did they all accuse each other of something; but the presence of a third person made it impossible for them to say it? Was Hanni against Dick in her dry little arguments about Hamlet because of the evening he'd had with the Junoesque girl? What was the pattern underneath? When would he know? Sometimes he felt that Dick could have thrown a knife at him, sitting on the other side of the hearth, his lips pale; his <sup>w</sup> own eyes, glaring at Dick, might have said the same! It reminded him of the time in <sup>the</sup> Hampton Court gardens, when there <sup>had</sup> been a stormy silence in the sky and all the leaves had been still: they <sup>had</sup> <sup>been</sup> <sup>in</sup> ~~were~~ all gripped together ~~with~~ the same uncanny enmity that was beyond any one of them. Whose purposes were they serving? How did these moods arise? What was the plan underneath?

Itals

✓ To P. 436

own personality as of no account, yet giving the lines his own life, with a peculiar intimacy. One could follow what he did and said in a special clarity: there was only the flow of his thoughts and round these the changing scenes---this was the play and all the talkative personalities who strutted on and off the stage made no difference to it. Hamlet had no staleness like the others, no hysteria or pride pushing at him, but a delicate appreciation of his effect on the audience, and even a sense of co-operation with them, so that he and they watched the spectacle of Hamlet's developing plan of action together. He showed that he had real powers of thought, which had grown in their own time and not been forced by the proud will or quickened by the need to cut a social figure. There was an entrancing simplicity about his style of speech. The others either tried to turn the verse into prose by making it sound colloquial and day-to-day, or they sang it to suggest the <sup>'music' of the lines:</sup> ~~beautiful words~~; in both cases they made it seem remote from real feelings. But Hamlet came through as the clean element, the quietness and reflection in the play, underneath his own declamations, and as the mainspring of the action and violence.

~~Granville said nothing in the argument, but waited for an entrance.~~

h.p. [They all trooped upstairs and had a bit of supper, with cocoa, and tempers were better after that. Dick smiled across at Pinkie, his eyes fluttering, and said, "Well, I think you win on points." ~~but I nearly got a kakock-~~

~~out in the second round.~~ He meant that he'd caught her out on a point of text, or rather memory--<sup>she</sup> quoted de Cloud as having said something which ~~he~~ <sup>she</sup> showed had been cut out of the ~~performance~~ <sup>performance.</sup>

~~In the kitchen Granville let go into a speech which Hanni seemed to have been fearing for some time; she'd nudged Dick once or twice and suggested they go to bed, but he sat on, which was unusual for him. Granville's theme was that Dick and Hanni hadn't been present at the play 'with their own lives': he didn't add that he thought Pinkie had done so. It was a strange statement, coming out of the blue in that way, and Dick raised his eyebrows and winked at~~

Outside there was a flat, empty silence as if the streets had been fixed there for centuries, growing naturally, and couldn't be disturbed, but were waiting for something unspecified, <sup>to happen,</sup> tensely, hushed, not allowing even the sound of a bird. Not a car passed in the distance; there was the sound of a train once, slowing down at a station. And across the sky there were flashes, probably from the trains.

Granville's part in the discussion was to attack Dick---or rather, that was how it was taken. He compared Dick's way of arguing with Pinkie's, and leaned forward across the kitchen-table talking indignantly, his chin thrust forward and his eyes staring out of his head ~~urgently~~ with an urgent <sup>expression,</sup> ~~gesture,~~ seeming to appeal to Dick at the same time as scolding him. <sup>1</sup>

"Pinkie talks because she loves the play and she's live in it and she's taken Hamlet seriously and she's frightened by it and it moves her and makes her think about her own life and her own struggles!" he cried. "But when you say 'old Bill Shakespeare' and 'young Hathaway's husband' and all that sort of things you make him sound small and weak and limited as if all he did was sit down and think up clever little plots for people like you to come and sniff at! Whereas what he did was wait for God to move him and pass through him, and Pinkie knows this! She knows the wonder of God in a person! All you seem to see in Hamlet is a text and a story, and so you make the play seem dead---look at the way you talk about it when you say 'that graveyard stuff' and 'the get-thee-hence gambit'! You make it seem impossible that a man wrote it with his whole life and so there's <sup>nothing</sup> ~~something~~ sacred in it, <sup>for you,</sup> you don't believe in men, that's why, you don't respect them, you don't see anything sacred in them! That's how Hanni talks, too---she isn't interested in the play much, I don't see why she should be but apparently she does, she seems to think we'll put her down as a fool if she doesn't say something! But when Pinkie talks about Shakespeare you feel he's somebody fabulous, not fabulous in a social way but just in himself, like when she said, 'He must have been such a sweet man!' But that's too soft for you, isn't it, you think you've got to be cleverer than that, you've got to say something clever and hard that shows how your brain's been working!"

He spoke in a rush, without noticing the changes in Dick's face.

He paused at the end, waiting for Dick to take him up and challenge him. But he didn't. There was just silence. Dick looked up at him with a peculiar smile, his eyes flickering in a more uncertain way than usual, and murmured, before getting up to go to bed, "Well, thanks a lot!"

Granville sat there with his mouth open as they trooped out of the room---the words seemed to have poured out of his mouth without his knowing, and he tried to recollect what they had been. He went downstairs ~~to the bedroom~~ behind Pinkie like someone not quite responsible for himself.

14

CHAPTER 14

The following <sup>week</sup> ~~Thursday~~ he'd just come back from a walk and was standing in his room alone, beginning to think that his optimism and hopes were unfounded and that the yellow flash in the sky had meant nothing---that he may as well return at once to Basrah, without waiting for his leave to end---, when there was a knock on the door and Dick put his head round the corner. It was late in the afternoon and he must have come straight from work. They were silent for a moment and Dick smiled.

"Hullo, old sport! I've been looking for you everywhere. But you'd broken camp!"

"I've been out for a walk."

<sup>Dick</sup> ~~He~~ came in and closed the door. He was in one of his neat, sparkling moods when he walked with rather tripping steps and there was a special brightness and flickering scrutiny in his eyes. He said he was getting off early the next afternoon and wanted to introduce Granville to a few of his friends. Granville asked, "Who?", with his mouth open. Dick replied in an ambiguous way---they were friends he kept to himself, he said, since a part of one's life had to be 'uninvestigated', didn't <sup>he</sup> Granville agree? And <sup>Granville</sup> he said, "Oh, yes, I do!" quickly, and thought to himself that <sup>agreeing</sup> ~~thinking~~ was as far as he ever got: <sup>but</sup> Dick actually did something! ~~He had his world~~ <sup>at the proposal.</sup> ~~already~~ Granville's heart turned over with excitement. This was his release---the cause of the yellow flash!

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"The operations marked top secret, captain," Dick said.

"Oh, yes, of course!"

They were to meet at a place called The Marquis a few hundred yards from Covent Garden, the Kingsway side, at four o'clock the next day. He was to go in as if he owned the place and ask for Mr Pollocke; then he'd probably be shown downstairs. It wasn't 'a brothel or anything boring like that," Dick added. Granville listened in a rapt way, gazing at him with admiration.

"It's a farewell gift."

"Thank you!"

"Rather like an Arab showing <sup>you</sup> his wives, I suppose: blood-brotherhood and all that caper," <sup>Dick</sup> he said with a breathless laugh. He added before he went, "Don't forget---top secret." The brief visit felt staged, in Dick's manner. He could hardly believe it had taken place, <sup>once</sup> when the house was silent again and the door downstairs had closed. How absurd! A place called The Marquis! But this time the exaggeration had come from someone else and he had to believe <sup>it</sup>! He had the sensation of being swept along and only seeing his life vaguely, as something that happened beyond him, in a ghostly fashion, while he tried to find a theme in it. ~~Dick had clearly assumed that he'd be leaving the following Monday, since he was due back in the office on Wednesday morning.~~ <sup>with</sup> They must think he was flying, since he hadn't booked a <sup>sea</sup> passage---in that case he would have had to leave already!

Pinkie had asked him again when he was leaving and he'd said, "Well, <sup>at the</sup> to get there <sup>proper</sup> in time, of course", as if it was all in hand. She asked then, "Are you flying?" and he said quickly, "Yes!" She seemed satisfied and went about quietly, it seemed to him with a new resolution. He remembered the face that had appeared to him a few days before, clear, gazing at him with dark eyes, quite alone, surrounded by nothing---by white clouds, perhaps: suppose it was coming to him now? He was so excited that evening

that he put on <sup>the</sup> scratched record 'Creole Shake' five or six times. Pinkie came in and he tightened his hold on himself and helped with the dinner in a matter-of-fact way. Then there was another piece of news. Dick rang up from Hampton Court and said that 'in the excitement of the chase' he'd forgotten to tell him that he'd heard at the office that morning that he <sup>Granville,</sup> was going to be asked to put in a report about Basrah. <sup>His</sup> Granville's heart did another turn, this time with <sup>dismay</sup> ~~dismay~~ at the words 'put in a report', which sounded menacing to him. But Dick went on to say that they were re-organising the Middle East network under Nevinson and they wanted his ideas on how it should be done. In other words, it was most flattering, and Granville said, "Well, I hope it's true!" Dick had got it from his own secretary, who, he said, 'apart from having a splendid pair of <sup>teats</sup> ~~apples~~ had sharp ears as well.'

Next day he woke ~~very~~ early and got up at once, an hour or more before the alarm usually went off. The first milk-delivery hadn't passed and there wasn't the usual dull roar of traffic in the distance, on the other side of the roofs. He heard sparrows chirping in the gables, and the rough little squawk of a starling. It felt as if the city wasn't <sup>inhabited</sup> ~~occupied~~ any more. Pinkie was lying half on her stomach, quite asleep, her arm hanging down towards the floor, almost touching <sup>it</sup>. They always kept the curtains closed at night because of the light from the street-lamp opposite, and as usual it took him some time to see where his clothes were. They threw them in a heap on two chairs when they went to bed, and sometimes on the floor. His clothes were <sup>always</sup> in a frightful state. He was never in time for the laundry and usually he had to wash out his shirts himself. He needed new socks and underwaer. Most of his good stuff was in Basrah and all he had for today was his tropical suit, which might be a bit chilly. As he dressed he decided to wash out his shirts <sup>that day,</sup> ~~in the morning,~~ hoping that he had a clean one in his drawer. He watched her in the dimness: she always seemed to be listening to something when she slept, quite still,

so childish and wholesome. He went to the door and made sure, as he did every day, by automatic habit now, that the latch<sup>lck</sup> clicked home when he closed it. The music-room looked harsh because the curtains had been left open and a cold wind was coming from the top of the window. There was no sun today and it was quite cold. He glanced down the street where nothing stirred. It had a fixed and mortified<sup>i</sup> look: the steps leading up to each house were deadly symmetrical, and the ramshackle cars still had their tiny parking lights on; the pavements seemed to sparkle dully in the raw air. He shivered and rubbed his hands together. As he went into the lavatory he reminded himself that in a few hours' time he'd be looking into Dick's 'uninvestigated' world. All of a sudden it was too much for him! He wouldn't be able to do it! He had an overwhelming sense of nausea. The world was too much---he couldn't go through with it! Soon the buses would be going by every few minutes in the distance and the shop-shutters would go up in<sup>like</sup> Commercial Road. People would begin walking by outside, and the ramshackle cars would leave their places with a grind. Windows would open and mops would appear, shaking the dust off. The world would get tired in a few minutes. Again the sense of total unworthiness afflicted him---he was unfit to be seen by other people, even to the pores of his skin---it was an unworthiness right down <sup>to</sup> in his living tissue; it bred in him and exuded from him like a vapour! The thought of going out was unbearable. But at the same time there was warmth and excitement, growing. It was a grim combination of expectation and fright!

He sat over breakfast for an hour, then took a cup of tea down to Pinkie. He lit the gas-fire and sat over<sup>it</sup>, waiting for her to stir in the darkness. He enjoyed the morning silence---it was like a last refuge from the day before him, like a farewell to himself, <sup>to</sup> ~~all~~ his intimacy. She roused herself and whispered drowsily, "Thank you", and began sipping her tea; it was a pleasant sound. Everything could be trusted at this hour; <sup>after that the</sup> ~~then~~ untruths started and one's own eyes weren't a safe guide any

n.p.

more, as the world came awake. He must be at The Marquid<sup>s</sup> at four o'clock; there were lots of dust-bins outside the door, Dick<sup>had</sup> said, and it was in a kind of back-lane. Pinkie went to work with a beltless red overcoat trailing from her shoulders and a little rouge on her lips. It was Friday, a fact which entered his already excited state ~~and~~ as an additional disturbance. There was a light-blue scarf round her neck, light for cool summer weather, transparent, like the vague blue of her eyes. He put it out of his mind: he would try to keep to the city-identity he'd discovered at the Lido with Hanni. He would reject suffering, feeling chill but nevertheless strong. Just before she went she glanced at him, still sleepy, and then turned as she usually did to look for her bag. It was on the floor of the music-room, by the chair where she'd sat the previous evening, and as she bent down to pick it up her coat looked like a cloak for a moment: she had the look of ~~someone very~~ <sup>someone and gentle</sup> dominant from the past. He wanted to cry out, 'Stay here today---don't let me go out!' But she'd already gone to the door, after giving him the usual little peck on his cheek, that was like an intimate voice in his ear, regretful and sisterly, as a sister's kiss might be before ~~she went off to be married~~ a long journey.

"I don't think I'll be back for dinner," she said.

"O.K.!"

He heard her close the door downstairs, then he strolled into the bathroom. There was powder <sup>on</sup> the wash-basin, and a few towels were crumpled damply together on the side of the bath. The rubber mat was dark with stains and mud. The house wasn't very well looked after these days. Pinkie was at work all day and then there were the usual visitors in the evenings; they left a pile of washing-up behind them. The younger girls like Ginger didn't seem to know how to handle a dish-cloth or a broom. Her friend Lucy said that she'd always thought an egg fried in its own juice, until Pinkie showed her youx needed fat. "Of course," Glanning said one day, "I believe that sort of cow isn't even good for the bed!"

n.p. [ He got down to washing his shirts in the bath, and threw in a pullover <sup>for</sup> ~~with~~ <sup>the latter</sup> ~~well~~. <sub>good measure.</sub> After that he did the towels and the rubber mat, scrubbing at it with a floor-brush. He quite enjoyed it. Then he went back into the bedroom, leaving it all to dry. Pinkie's wardrobe door was open, with a scarf lying outside. He picked this up and put it in one of her drawers, then tried to close the wardrobe. Some old high-heeled shoes were in the way, and he had to heap everything up inside to get the door home. He then tried to write a letter to Mohammed, asking how things were going <sup>at</sup> in the office and telling him to get the files in order for the report he would have to make, but he was too excited and couldn't settle to it. [ The morning passed in this way, and he wandered from room to room, quite as if it was a last visit. There was a troubled and yet ecstatic feeling at the pit of his stomach. For a time he gazed out of the window, leaning on his desk. The sound of the traffic seemed to indicate tremendous preparations outside, as <sup>always,</sup> ~~always~~ and as always the <sup>climax</sup> ~~climax~~ never came. He was too excited to eat much lunch but made himself some eggs with toast, and drank two or three cups of tea. Afterwards he started to change. And suddenly he realised there were no clean shirts. His drawer was more or less empty. He'd washed the only two presentable ones! What a fool! There were two white ones <sup>s</sup> screwed up into a ball at the bottom of the clothes-basket in the bathroom, but it was too late to bring them to life. ~~But~~ On the other hand one of them wasn't too dirty, and he rushed upstairs to get it ironed. It would take him quite half-an-hour to reach town, another fifteen minutes to find the place, perhaps; and there was little more than an hour! He waited for the iron to get hot, and in the meantime rushed down downstairs again to have a look at his tropical jacket. It would be decidedly cold, but there was nothing else for it. The excitement was growing in him all the time. 'What the devil's the matter with you?' he thought. 'Are you going back to childhood?' It reminded him of the Abbott's Road days, in the time of the so-called giddy fits. He was all at sixes and sevens,

n.p.

n.p.

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the skin of his face prickled nervously, ~~but~~ he was sweating. The jacket felt extraordinarily light as he put it over his shoulders. But it would help him later, perhaps: it would make him feel more of a visitor than he was---just off back to the Middle East; <sup>more detached,</sup> ~~always flying away, yakko!~~

This jacket was badly creased where he'd flung it down some evenings before, and he decided to give it a touch of the iron. He had a horrified sensation that he would miss Dick. The release---! <sup>And</sup> ~~then~~ Dick wouldn't repeat his offer; he would book his passage back: Death! The shirt couldn't be rushed, though he did only the collar and part of the front, and the cuffs. It wasn't likely that they'd ask him to take off his jacket! When he got it on it was a sight. There were crinkles everywhere. But when he slipped the jacket on as well it wasn't too bad. ~~The jacket was still to do.~~ He needed a damp cloth for <sup>the jacket,</sup> ~~this,~~ afraid that without it he'd give the <sup>material</sup> ~~clothes~~ a polished look. But he didn't have time. He'd risk it. The effect wasn't too bad! At any rate, the creases couldn't be seen any longer. There was a dirty spot above one of the pockets and he was just about to open the drawer of his desk to get out the little bottle of petrol for cleaning stains when he realised that the bottle he had in mind was in his desk in Basrah, ~~and he~~ <sup>then</sup> dashed out of the house. There was quite long walk to the bus-stop, <sup>but</sup> ~~but~~ if the traffic wasn't bad he'd get through in less than twenty minutes, <sup>on</sup> the bus. He ran to the end of the road and remembered with horror that he'd left the iron on, and <sup>then ran</sup> ~~he had to run~~ all the way back. It would <sup>be</sup> ~~have been~~ quite risky <sup>to</sup> ~~leaving~~ <sup>e</sup> it on, despite the asbestos under the iron; Hanni had done it at Hampton Court once and <sup>had returned</sup> ~~came back~~ to find <sup>ironing board</sup> ~~all the wood black,~~ just ready to burst into flames. Well, he'd certainly be late now! Dick would probably be gone. He wouldn't get there before half-past four. ~~He~~ was gratified that, because of the running, his jacket was none too light; it helped him get to the bus-stop faster! Sweat was pouring out of his arm-pits, and there was a dark stain on each side of his jacket which reminded him of the dog-days

in Basrah. He liked travelling by bus, and felt calm the moment he got on. He must learn how to conquer the city; this was his thought as he settled into his seat.

The Marquis was in a sombre place. A back-alley gave on to a bombed site where there were deep cellars ~~III~~ open to the sky like an excavation, and on the other side were the grim backs of buildings, dark and tall, with windows of different shapes, some of them <sup>patched</sup> ~~patched~~ up with cardboard. The lane was cobbled, with ruts and pools of water. And there was a vague painted sign, The Marquis, in front of an iron door like the backstage door of a theatre, with <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ dust-bins <sup>John had mentioned</sup> piled high with refuse, the lids toppling off <sup>to</sup> ~~in front of it~~. He pushed this door open and couldn't see anything inside. Nor was there ~~as~~ sound. The throbbing of the traffic in the distance ceased. He realised that he was standing immediately in front of a thick curtain and that this was blocking his view. He pushed it aside, making it rattle from the brass hoops above, and saw before him a dimly-lit, shoddily elegant and plush little bar with deep armchairs and <sup>mesopotamian</sup> ~~little~~ round tables. There didn't appear to be any windows, only a great fan in the ceiling which reminded him of the Mesopotamia hotel---the small bar where journalists used to meet. Behind the bar itself, among bottles and shining glass mirrors, there was a pale, tired-looking girl reading a picture-~~maggazine~~ magazine, quite rapt in it, so much so that she didn't look up when he came in.

"Good afternoon," he said.

She looked up slowly. Her pallor was extraordinary; it seemed to enter her fingertips and her eyes, like a total state of being. Yet she was pretty, and her smile was gracious and kindly. <sup>However,</sup> <sup>after</sup> But when she'd said "Good afternoon" in reply she looked back slowly <sup>to</sup> ~~at~~ her magazine again and went on reading. He waited, and then slowly she looked up again, this time with her eyebrows raised in a questioning way.

"Yes?" she asked.

"Is Mr Pollocke here?"

"Yes, they're all downstairs." And she returned <sup>to the magazine</sup> ~~at once~~ <sup>more</sup> ~~thought~~ with the same slow motion, ~~as before~~, imbued with her strange total pallor, ~~to her magazine.~~ He pushed through another curtain which <sup>pre</sup> ~~presumably~~ led downstairs and saw a flight of wooden steps with a russet light at the bottom, and from there came the murmur of voices. At once a drum started, making him jump, and he saw the edge of a chequered table-cloth, then a stone pillar, like that in a Roman temple but more slender. What on earth had he come into? He walked down and ~~came into~~ <sup>entered</sup> a kind of restaurant with a dance-floor; ~~some kind of~~ <sup>a</sup> rehearsal was taking place; there was a small band, and mostly ~~coloured~~ <sup>dark</sup> girls in tights or beach trousers, and a tall, <sup>young</sup> ~~dark man~~ <sup>Arab</sup> with long hands directing them all. <sup>Granville</sup> ~~He~~ looked round for Dick and found him at a corner table with a muscular-looking dark girl, who was holding his hand. Dick turned round quite casually and said to him, "Oh, Pip, come and join us, they're getting ready for a hair-dance, believe it or not!" He sat down and Dick didn't trouble to introduce him to the muscular-looking girl, nor did she pay any attention to him. "There's a girl who whirls her head round at a terrific rate," Dick went on. "It's really marvellous!"

"Do you always come here?" Granville asked. It was like seeing into the back of Dick's mind, into the darkness and mystery. He was intrigued and spell-bound,

"Oh, quite often, when I can get the afternoon off."

"But it's like Basrah, <sup>hot</sup> ~~or~~ somewhere in London!" There was even ~~another~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~hotel~~ fan in the <sup>ceiling</sup> ~~roof~~, ~~of~~ <sup>precisely</sup> the same shape as those in the Mesopotamia. <sup>Most</sup> ~~And two~~ of the girls were Arab---Morrocan or Algerian. The dimness of everything, the heat and loudness were the same. "It's like one of the cabarets in Basrah!" he added.

"Yes, I thought it'd take you back." Dick was quietly proud, and gave him a gleaming look sideways, keeping hold of the girl's hand.

n.p. Granville began to feel at home and stretched out his legs. There was no light where they were sitting but a strong yellow glow from the stage. There were arguments going on between the tall young man and one of the Moroccan girls, while the others changed or combed their hair or practised steps. He gazed at them. He still couldn't properly believe and kept turning and glancing at Dick, to make sure it was him.

Dick spoke to him in a quiet voice, without looking at him, "You think I'm a rum bird, don't you? Is that what you're thinking?"

He was at a loss for a reply, then said, "Well, you certainly lead your own life!"

"Don't you believe in that?"

"Oh, yes, absolutely!" He said this in a piping voice, and one of the girls by the stage peered into the darkness to see who it was for a moment

"What about a drink?" Dick asked, still without looking at him. There was a waiter in a white jacket whom he called over with "Joe", ~~Apparently, he had been in the corner near the band,~~ and Granville now saw that there was a tiny lighted bar similar to the one upstairs. Out of an absurd desire to give himself the impression that he was in Basrah---without the pain of being separated from Pinkie---he asked for arak, <sup>when the waiter came,</sup> though he never touched the stuff ~~when he was actually out there.~~ <sup>in Basrah.</sup> To his surprise they had it, and the other two, Dick and the muscular-looking girl, followed suit. He heard Dick explaining to her that his friend was 'from Basrah', and she leaned forward to glance at him in the dimness for a moment, then leaned back again.

When the drinks came Dick said he liked the pepperminty taste and touched glasses with him---"Well, old sport, here's to a good trip, and be careful how you go in the old casbah!"

The hair-dance was extraordinary. It was done by a thin wraith of a girl, dark and quite small, with masses of black hair let down to her waist. Being almost naked as well, with a flimsy brassiere and knickers of frilled black silk, she had a starved and ~~defenceless~~ <sup>defenceless</sup> look. Her should-

ers were sharp like ~~little~~<sup>k</sup> knuckles, and she hunched them as if ~~she was~~  
 cold. "Jesus," he heard the muscular-looking girl murmur to Dick, "why  
 don't she get some flesh on her bones?" She spoke with a cockney accent,  
 in the mild, tender, soft-voiced way that often went with it in a woman.  
 The long-haired girl ~~also~~ walked in a hunched way, as if ~~she was~~ ~~xxxx~~  
 scurrying away from something, but the moment she danced it was different.  
 Most of the noise was made ~~by~~ the drums, which ~~xxxx~~<sup>got</sup> faster and faster;  
 a negro bent over them, sweat pouring down from the top of his head, which  
 was bald and strangely wrinkled, and he gave the impression of trying to  
 beat the life out of something, with a dead, fixed look in his eyes, his  
 teeth gritted together. There was a pianist also, trying to make himself  
 heard. The girl danced alone at first, her hips revolving and her arms held  
 out stiffly, rather like the gypsy women he'd seen when a sheikh gave a  
 party. The idea, apparently, was that the young ~~man, probably an~~ Arab, with  
 an odd grinning expression <sup>in his</sup> ~~of the~~ face, very taut and hard-skinned, should  
 gradually bring her to life, or wake her from sleep, for her eyes were  
 closed as she danced. Her revolving became faster as he weaved his way  
 round her, staring into her face with a fixed grinning look <sup>that</sup> seemed  
 to be natural to him, and she began stamping her feet as if under his spell.  
 There was something of the faun about him, with the cloven hoof, except that  
 he was harder, without soft movements; Granville <sup>could see</sup> ~~felt beyond a doubt that~~  
~~he was~~ <sup>the</sup> Arab <sup>in him</sup> ~~now~~—it was in the fixity of his movements, and the shining  
 darkness of his eyes, <sup>k</sup> ~~flicker~~ing but not really changing. The girl stamped  
 and pushed her head back, her hands pressed down at her side now and her  
 body taut. There was a mounting violence from the drum, and the whole room  
 seemed to shake with it, but then the girl began to droop and grow limp,  
 subsiding until she'd gone down on her knees. The real hair-dance started  
 here. Her hair fell round her face and shoulders in dense strands, while  
 the young man continued to weave round her, glaring into her face, his  
 back bent, so that he seemed to be trying to fly in an ungainly way every

time he took a little leap round her. As he did this her head began to revolve, at first slowly; her neck seemed extraordinarily flexible, and her head turned quicker and quicker until her hair was flying round like a fan, quite disembodied from her, it seemed, not even recognisable as hair, but simply a dark shadow whirling round at the top of her head at a terrific rate. One caught a glimpse of the whites of her eyes every time her head went back, but otherwise her face was a dark blur; only her eyes flashed like a quick disc, white and staring, every second or so. The drum was so loud that the floor was trembling, and the drummer had become so frantic that it was impossible to see what more he could do to satisfy himself except fling the sticks in the air and break up the drum up with his hands. But he persisted with the sticks, delicately, too, as one could see if one looked at his hands closely as they quivered and fluttered over the drums; he shot his arm out and contracted it <sup>at a</sup> with tremendous speed, and he made the rhythm seem composed of many contradictory rhythms inside it, jaggedly opposed to each other but making up a unity, like sudden claps of thunder, dominated by the delicate thrusts of <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ arms and his still, bent body that was like a rock behind all the movement. The drum-beats stumbled over each other with sharp crashes, and stopped, then, after a moment of dead silence, started again in a headlong way, like heavy things tumbling down one after the other. [It was impossible to imagine after a time how the axis underneath the whirling shadow of hair could be some one's head, and there was something horrible in this, because it seemed that at any minute her head might fly off like a ball.] She was quite another person. The defenceless look had disappeared. She seemed to be asserting something in her own life, with a tremendous ferocity, driving her head round with the same relentlessness as there was in the drummer, so that her body seemed only the vehicle of a maddened will. She made the young man weaving round her look much the lesser creature, and even the sense of hardness and fixity in him had disappeared; he was soft at her side. When the dance came to

n.p.

an end she jumped up and flounced off the floor as if she'd won a personal battle with them all, then she stood wiping herself down with a towel at the edge of the stage, gazing into the darkness with a pouting, resentful expression. Slowly the naked and helpless look grew on her again, and once more one could see how the bones of her shoulders were like little knuckles, painfully sharp, and her crouching manner returned. Underneath, still, was an awkward power of survival, that showed in her walk as she kicked out her legs, hurrying along, slightly crouched, her eyes squinting a little with apprehension.

"Well, how did you like it?" Dick whispered. He nodded enthusiastically, without speaking. "I've seen it before," Dick added. He said that most of them were Morrocan, from Spanish Morroco, and the drummer was a Nubian. Apparently, he took drugs. The pianist was also Negro, but he came from Nigeria or the Gold Coast, Dick didn't know which. The drummer's skin was terribly wizened for a young man's, and behind his brown colouring there was something ashen-grey, especially in his lips, which were cracked like parched earth and perpetually open; his eyes, when he looked up drowsily now and then, were yellow and bloodshot. The pianist got up from his stool, stretching, (a rather clerky-looking young man with glasses), and Beanville heard him murmur to the drummer as he gazed down at his drowsy figure, "You kind of sleepy, man?" But the drummer made no reply, and the pianist laughed easily. There was a lot of arguing among the girls, and voices were raised now the band had stopped. "Hey, you better watch your feet---!" Then there would be clapping laughter. "Your feet ~~swell~~ swell up <sup>to</sup> twice their size when you dance! What you got in 'em, springs?" Dick said that the girl who'd done the hair dance was called Joy Celeste; that wasn't her real name, and nobody seemed to know what her real name was. "They're a mixed bunch---students, all sorts," he said. He thought the hair-girl's real name was Makboula. But one must never use it: she flared up or cried, or something. She had a room off the Strand

and appeared not to live with anyone, but she was always talking about 'dad', though 'dad' had never appeared. She'd been born in Cairo and brought up in <sup>Tangiers,</sup> ~~Alex~~ "and as you know," Dick added, "dancing over there's like street-walking over here."

"Is she Muslim or Christian?" Granville asked, for no reason that he could see.

Dick burst out laughing. "Don't be academic!"

The muscular-looking girl leaned forward. "What was that word you used?" she asked.

"Epidemic," <sup>"Dick said at once."</sup> <sup>Dick said</sup> "I was talking about your syphilis" whereupon she knocked him playfully on the hand. He turned to Granville again, "This is Alice. Have you met?" They nodded to each other. "She never touches men, do you, Alice? Because she's got a snake. It makes up for everything. Isn't that true, Alice?" She nodded and smiled. Her legs were muscular and short, thrust out under her in a tom-boy fashion, and she had a pugnacious ease of manner, combined with the softness of voice he'd noticed already, with a laughing, casual look in her eyes. She had short hair like a boy's, and full, round cheeks with a slight flush of health.

"Is that true?" Granville asked in his clergyman's piping voice, leaning forward. "Have you got a snake?"

"Yes, that's right!"

He was no wiser, and turned to Dick for help. "Has she?" he asked.

"Yes, she winds it round her neck at the night-clubs, makes it dance and all that caper, kisses it and touches it up and ~~she~~ runs it between her legs. They love it!"

"It comes when I call it," the girl said. "Sidney, Sidney!" And it comes right up and starts climbing!"

"That's right!" Dick cried with a laugh. "You ought to see the show; Pip! There's a wonderful lot of hanky-panky!"

Alice was born in London, Dick went <sup>on</sup> "the son of a fish-monger";

she laughed and hit at his hand again, <sup>crying,</sup> ~~then said,~~ "You're always taking the mike!"

Later they all assembled upstairs, and the pale girl behind the bar, whom Dick called Joyce, came to life from her magazine. She poured ~~the~~ drink slowly and carefully, biting her lower lip with ~~the~~ concentration, and ~~she~~ lifted <sup>the glasses</sup> ~~them~~ on to the bar with great attention, careful not to spill a drop. Dick was on speaking terms with her, too. He told Granville when they were sitting <sup>down</sup> that she got through <sup>one</sup> magazine a day and let everybody know when she was a bit tipsy at the end of the evening that she was waiting for her 'Romeo'. Joy Celeste came over to join <sup>them</sup> and there was a tremor of fear in Granville as he stood up to shake hands with her. Shaking hands wasn't the thing to do, it seemed, and she took no notice, only sat down at his side, looking up at him with slightly frightened surprise. "What did he stand up for?" she asked Dick. Granville was still hovering above <sup>her</sup> ~~them~~ in an equivocal state, beginning to wonder <sup>what</sup> ~~if~~ what poise he'd managed to keep so far would break down; but Dick said, "He's been like that for years, old girl! He gets up and sits down every few minutes. It's a joint in his arse. It formed just like that, from nowhere, and the doctors couldn't do anything for him! He gets up to avoid it squeaking---that's when it's not going through a farting phase; he has to stay at home then. Take no notice, he'll come down again soon!" <sup>laugh!</sup> The girls laughed and, laughing as well, he sat down ~~again~~, recovered from the giddy embarrassment into which he'd fallen without them seeing. 'Test No. 1', he thought, 'initiation by fire and water!' And having got through the first moment he felt easy. "Now let me get you all a drink," he said. It was like passing safely through a barrier into a fresh world. He sat back in his chair, beaming at them. And again it was arak. The hair-girl looked surprised when he suggested it. He told her he'd been in Basrah, and she looked more cheerful; it gave them something to talk about, and the other two drew their chairs together, to whisper and peck at each other's cheeks.

h.p.

He noticed she had wide-set, very black eyes, deep in her head, and her cheek-bones were high and prominent. She leaned forward when she talked to him, <sup>with</sup> a strained, squinting look ~~in her eyes~~ as if she was trying to see something on the table more clearly. She'd plaited her hair up, which gave her a more starved and staring look than before. She began talking about her 'dad', as Dick had told him, and how they'd come from the Hejaz, and what a fine man <sup>dad</sup> ~~he~~ was, a trader who knew every port along the coasts of Africa. She said 'mother' had adored him and had always said that he put finer clothes on her back than any other man she'd known or heard tell of. She talked in a light voice, her eyes squinted, gazing at the table fixedly, like someone reading from a fairy-tale. She seemed to be both remembering it and also telling the story for the first time. He congratulated her on her dance, and she said that it was 'all right', only the drummer annoyed her. The rhythm wasn't quite right, she said. With an oddly meek expression, her shoulders more bowed than before, so that she seemed even smaller and frailer, with her bony, sallow face and anxious eyes, like those of a starved child, she added that twenty years <sup>before</sup> ~~ago~~ he, the drummer, would have been serving at her table, being a Nubian, and 'fitting the little shoes on my feet'; 'dad' had always taught her that if you gave 'those people' an inch they took a mile. But as she drank the arak she became more cheerful, and unbent her shoulders a little. She smiled and told him that the pianist, who was a medical student, was in love with her, and always followed her home to her place at night, after they'd finished at the club. He didn't do it in the hope of going in with her, but to protect her, because it was always about three in the morning by the time they came off the stage. And he never spoke to her; wasn't that wonderful? Granville asked why the <sup>pianist</sup> didn't speak if they were in the same dancing troupe together and saw each other every day. She said in a little voice, "It's pure love, I suppose!" He couldn't tell if she was joking or not. The moment she said it she pushed her glass across to Dick and said, "That milk appeals to me. The

same again, please!" When she'd been supplied again he began talking  
 about the desert. Did she know the feeling in the morning, <sup>he asked,</sup> especially in  
 the spring when the air was brilliantly clear and cool, and all the buildings  
 shone like coral, at least in the district where he lived, <sup>the feeling</sup> of having a  
 great thriving power in her legs when she walked, and a feeling of readiness  
 for the day? She blinked, <sup>in a completely puzzled way,</sup> and he thought that perhaps a trace of a smile  
 passed her lips. But she continued bent over the table, her arms on the  
 sides of her chair, gazing before her. The arak was working on him, <sup>no</sup>  
 less. "Do you know what I mean?" he cried, flinging his arms out so that  
 the other girl, sitting with Dick, flinched for a moment. "When walking  
 along is a terrific sensuous enjoyment? When you feel you're really spring-  
 ing forward! All your body relishes the movement, doesn't it?" Dick and  
 one or two people at the bar looked across at him. "I've never known that  
 before," he went on, "not such perfection of activity! When you're free,  
 in your body! It was like walking into a new sort of world every day,  
 all sparkling and clear, and yet being perfectly safe---you know what I  
 mean, without the risk of the journey, and feeling lonely and strange in a  
 place, but every day that marvellous novelty, of your senses, I mean you  
 felt it at the tips of your fingers, and breathed it in, and had it in  
 your toes as you walked along! The sky never seemed a long way away there  
 as it does in England, at least on a cloudy day." <sup>One</sup> I could imagine that sky  
 spreading over the desert outside the city---do you see what I mean? I  
 could see the edge of the desert from my balcony---oh, wonderful! I used  
 to gaze ~~at~~ <sup>on</sup> at it for hours <sup>end</sup> sometimes in the morning when I didn't go to the  
 office, if it was spring and the heat wasn't too bad, and it used to shimmer  
 out there. Have you ever been to Basrah?" <sup>he added breathlessly.</sup> She uttered a quiet, "No,"  
 and took a long sip of her drink. He sat back and breathed in happily,  
 while she poked about in her bag for something and at length pulled out  
 a nail-file and began doing her nails. "Yes," he said, "you feel quite  
 unknown to yourself there. For the first time in my life I felt I was

"...that you talked every day?" Dick asked him with a smile from the other side of the table. "A little vulgar, a case," the hair girl said quietly, without changing her expression on the slightest, filling her hands.

actually living in the sky---" "Where?" she said, screwing up her face!

"I mean in the silence all round the earth, not snatching at it and going nervously to and fro from men to the silence and back again, as I'd done before! Every day I felt I almost touched something---golden---sparkling!"

She pointed to his glass. "I think you'd better go easy on that," she murmured. <sup>They all laughed and</sup> ~~but they all~~ drank another <sup>arak.</sup> glass, and after that she no longer had the ~~same~~ spirit of criticism. Dick was waving his arms about, calling,

"More snakes!" In a <sup>funny-looking</sup> merry, ~~odd-looking~~ little group, bumping into each other, they went off to Soho. It was colder now and he felt the thinness of <sup>his</sup> the tropical jacket. ~~What centuries away from that afternoon he was now!~~

He put his arm round the hair-girl's shoulder, <sup>swinging</sup> along. The muscular-looking girl at Dick's side was steady and quiet, <sup>as a wife might be</sup> How marvellous it all was, to <sup>be</sup> actually ~~be~~ with people, ~~to~~ to be lost, to have no careful thoughts and no suspicions! The hair-girl walked with jerky little steps at his side like someone in an endless distraught argument with a voice <sup>her</sup> inside that was never revealed to other people. She had the same way of gazing <sup>in front of</sup> <sup>as before</sup> before her, only now at the pavement, <sup>as though she'd</sup> ~~as they walked along~~

They went to an underground place called the Gare St Lazare which Dick knew, approached by a narrow, unlit corridor and then a wooden staircase. It seemed <sup>that</sup> only members were allowed in, and Dick wasn't a member as he'd thought. The hair-girl pushed forward to a little grill by the entrance, from where they could hear a screeching band, and the sound of talk.

A young man was sitting in the darkness behind the grill with a heavy, pale face and dark eyebrows, and his expression was one of final and unapproachable boredom; his eyes didn't alter by a flicker as he talked. <sup>He and the hair-girl</sup> ~~They knew~~

<sup>knew</sup> each other, apparently. She hadn't paid her subscription. It was only five shillings, so Dick paid it. She pointed out Granville to the young man behind the grill and said, "He's just come from Basrah!" He showed not the slightest interest, only nodded while counting out the change <sup>from</sup> ~~for~~ a pound note. He put down a ten-shilling note, then counted out the rest

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seeming to search for something.

in silver and coppers, putting them in neat little piles.' The hair-girl leaned towards the grill and said in a complaining voice, "That's right, give <sup>us</sup> ~~him~~ all your small <sup>fuckin'</sup> change!" And the young man's face, slightly sweating, became animated for the first time: "He gave me a note! Everybody's giving me notes tonight!" Then he returned to his former deadness of expression and pushed the money, in three <sup>neat</sup> little piles on top of the ten-shilling note, carefully under the grill, giving it a last reminiscent look as if he'd actually created <sup>it</sup> ~~them~~. [Inside there was bedlam, at least for the first few yards. A saxophonist was standing on the platform, his head back and sweat pouring down from his chin in the most grotesque <sup>way</sup> fashion, making a high-pitched wailing note while everyone else in the band leaned or lolled in a drugged state and clusters of people round the platform made swooning movements and raised their eyebrows as the notes went higher and higher. <sup>when</sup> As Joy Celeste walked <sup>past the platform</sup> by the saxophonist did a miraculously quick bow and blew a raspberry after her through <sup>his</sup> the instrument, then swung up again and went on with the high swooning notes. She took no notice and walked jerkily through the crowd on the dancing floor to where the tables were. One or two people tapped her on the shoulder in a familiar way, but she ~~never~~ <sup>had</sup> took notice of them. He wondered that so many people knew her--- she was so frail and scurrying as if she only knew how to avoid contact; yet they were familiar with her, in a kindly way, and seemed <sup>quite</sup> to expect that she should take no notice of them. He saw that the dark walls all round were painted with signs like 'Baggage', 'Wanted on Voyage' and 'Réserve', and in huge white letters there were the words INFORMATION and DÉFENSE DE PISSER.' They ate what the place could offer, eggs and sausages, and sat on drowsily recovering from the arak. There was a night-club called The Daybreak where both the girls had to dance after midnight, and the hair-girl said she had to hurry home and see 'dad' beforehand. [Dick and Granville got back to Chaworth Road about midnight and found no one at home. A tremor of fear threatened to pass through him on account of Pinkie, that

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she hadn't come back, but he quickly checked himself as they half-stumbled up to the kitchen for a last cup of coffee. <sup>After all, he had his own life now!</sup> ~~And he was also too happy.~~

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They sat in silence on either side of the table, gazing before them; he felt that all his limbs had expanded and that a glow had come into him; how could he ever have felt unworthy? They were the same limbs as before, yet they breathed properly now! Dick slipped off to bed, and Pinkie came in just before one o'clock.

heavy and shining, and her hips were bare and round.

She was in an unusually direct and brazen mood. She asked him with darkening eyes and a slight smile, looking at the ground, when they'd last had sex, and he replied in an obedient way, like a boy, "Oh, about a week ago, I think"; and he laughed, expecting her to do the same---to cover her own embarrassment at such a question. But her face didn't change. Instead, she walked in to the bedroom, her red coat still on, trailing behind her like a cloak, her eyes strangely level with a menacing light in them, and said, throwing down her bracelet on his desk, "Well, what about some, now?" <sup>and undressed slowly, lowering her straps so that her breasts suddenly showed in the dimness,</sup> She didn't switch the light on, <sup>And after they'd got into bed</sup> she took sex from him in a silent, unabashed, business-like way he'd never known in her before. It excited and overpowered him ~~as if~~ as if he'd been a boy in puberty. She had a mild air of assault. Also he could smell the strangeness on her. He knew, for the first time, with his body, as a quite silent consciousness, that she'd been on a bed with somebody else. Also there was an undue wetness, and he had the swift bodily impression that he was mixing his orgasm with <sup>someone else's,</sup> another ~~one~~, perhaps with two or three. ~~She was exhausted enough to take him without fear, perhaps; not even earnestness on his part would have discouraged her.~~ It was a new form of sex for them. It marked a new path, with different excitements. Usually he would murmur endearments to her which always seemed unduly lofty to him afterwards, but which nevertheless <sup>had seemed to</sup> ~~seemed to~~ excite her. This time he didn't, and in the silence between them a certain hard relish formed that had never existed before. There was also a suggestion of pain for him---something that bowed

him down. But <sup>in future</sup> ~~if~~ offered the chance that every act between them would be exciting from now on, even if there wasn't love or affection between them; it would be a silent act, requiring no participation of feeling. And that was a relief. There would be this silent directness---nothing voluptuous or abandoned, ~~but~~ <sup>each</sup> both of them in ~~rather~~ isolated state, fulfilling their needs. Yet it wasn't like the former separateness that was more or less an advanced masturbation: the silence now joined their needs together, and they were at one remove more from themselves than <sup>from</sup> each other. It was a glimpse of future things.

The aftermath of sex was increasingly <sup>one</sup> of total inner collapse for him. The world was grim and heavy---almost touching the senses, its presence final and devastating, so that nothing light seemed possible any more. There was only darkness. The silence was a death-silence. This happened more and more. It was like ejaculating his torn heart each time, a little more of it, so that he was horribly deprived, and felt given over to enemies, <sup>who were</sup> un-named and in frightful proliferating hordes, his body abandoned utterly to them.

*Oh, he had his own life now! His own secret!*

He had his own secret now. He felt better protected: he'd entered another world she knew nothing about. 'Let everything deteriorate,' he thought again, as he'd done the first evening, when he <sup>his face</sup> stood by the window feeling the breeze touch <sup>Yes,</sup> him like an intimate breath. Mystery would come back into their lives, with danger, its friend. But was it possible, he

asked himself, that he would ever sleep with another woman? He and Pinkie had shared the same bed so long that the touch of sex had come to mean for him <sup>Yet</sup> her touch. <sup>And</sup> the thought of somebody else's flesh was a blasphemy against hers. It stirred in him the old compassion towards her. <sup>Since</sup> the day they'd been married he hadn't touched another woman. <sup>But</sup> Now the familiar prison of touch and smell was going to be broken, he knew it. His certainty, though only his brain asserted it, brought down on him an uncontrollable nervousness as if his organs inside were collapsing. Only

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in sleep was he close to her. Habit closed <sup>the usual</sup> / ~~the~~ shroud over them <sup>of the day.</sup> They were  
~~together~~ together for a moment when they woke up each morning, in the first  
unguarded drowsiness, <sup>before</sup> ~~but~~ the awkwardness and reserve <sup>started</sup> ~~started~~ as the world  
~~attired~~ attired.

The image of the hair-girl kept occurring to his mind. He was content  
to sit for two or three mornings in his room simply remembering the events  
of that evening <sup>anyway</sup>. He put together everything Dick had said, the laughter,  
the shape of the bar in the dimness of the russet lights, <sup>at The Marquis</sup> the harsh white wall  
of the Gare St. Lazare. He went over it again and again. He'd ascertained  
the hair-girl's address, from Dick. Her face became a constant factor in  
his mind, motionless and perhaps not quite alive. He remembered her deep  
eye-sockets, like shadowy discs, and her high cheek-bones; and how her hair  
had gone round like a fan. He couldn't tell if he was bringing her to mind  
deliberately, or whether she was really an influence on him. It was pleas-  
ant enough to have someone to think about. Pinkie couldn't see his thoughts.

~~It was quite ridiculous but he put himself the question, Was the hair-girl's~~  
one that <sup>had</sup> been appearing to <sup>ed</sup> me <sup>him?</sup> since that afternoon at the <sup>to her</sup> ~~lido?~~ But <sup>Jay</sup>  
<sup>Celeste didn't</sup> she <sup>e</sup> wasn't <sup>as the image had</sup> gazing at him. And she was surrounded by many people---shadows---  
vague movements; he couldn't tell precisely. She was gazing at a point  
before her, <sup>at the</sup> ~~at~~ table, ~~perhaps~~, her eyes screwed up. He remembered her talk  
about 'dad'. He imagined 'dad' tall for some reason, with a tiny, bald,  
wizened head like the top of one of those wooden nails found in antique  
furniture. 'Dad' lumbered slowly about the place with heavy feet but said  
little; and he always had his hands in his pockets.

The weather became downcast and more chilly, so that fires were  
necessary, and a frightening political crisis broke, involving, of all areas,  
the Middle East. It concerned Rubath, a small and wealthy shiekhdom  
living on its oil-dividends. A plot against the sheikh's life had been  
uncovered, and foreign agents were <sup>supposed</sup> said to be at the bottom of it. That  
was the first news, in ominous tones. Then twenty foreigners were expelled

from the country, and among these was an attché of the Russian legation. It was a rash move for a tiny sheikhdom. Moscow at once sent a threatening note, accusing the sheikh of being in the hands of 'western influences' and of making libellous charges. There was a real set-to, and extra editions of the evening papers came out. ~~Every year since the war there'd been a big political crisis like this.~~ British troops were requested by the sheikh, from the Aden protectorate. That was the cause of a further outcry; the sheikhdom was ~~supposed to be in~~ Britain's pocket, and the English 'aide-de-camp' of the sheikh was supposed to be the political mind behind the expulsions. The sheikh came out with a statement that a Russian spy-ring had been uncovered, and that a communist 'shadow-cabinet' <sup>had been</sup> was ready; also some high-ranking officers in the army were involved, but they were nationalists and not in the communist camp; it seemed that everybody was against the sheikh. ~~He wasn't exactly a wicked ruler, but he wouldn't share his money. Schools and the beginning of a university had gone up in Rubath, with a hospital and paved roads, but the villages were little sinks of malaria and semi-starvation.~~ America was keeping out of it, not wanting to be identified ~~at all times~~ with 'colonial' policies. ~~There was no trouble in Basrah, no sympathetic demonstrations of any kind.~~ He read the papers anxiously, and people started arguing about the pros and cons. Glenning said <sup>that</sup> the British would be fools to send any troops, but the danger was that the Russians would then step in and put up a ~~shadow~~ puppet government there. Every headline was about the crisis. Pinkie asked him if he'd booked his air-passage back, and, not to tell her a lie, he said, "Why? You getting worried about my safety?" with a smile. And she gave him a glance as if he'd just <sup>taken</sup> a manly devil-may-care attitude---the kind of look she might have given her brother Bigel.

There was a loud argument one evening in the kitchen between Pinkie and Dick which he thought at first was political, but it was about a money transation. Apparently, they'd shared expenses for the party Pinkie

had given the evening before Granville's arrival, ~~back~~. He was amazed how hardy and resistant they <sup>both</sup> were, ~~in their grievance with each other~~. They ~~each stuck to their guns~~ and weathered <sup>each other's</sup> all the insults <sup>so</sup> quite calmly. Dick had wanted the party mainly ~~in order~~ to get to know the girl called Lucy, Ginger's friend; her nickname in the group, Granville now learned, was 'Linger-Longer'. Linger-Longer was unwilling to go out with Dick alone, but she looked on Pinkie as respectable, <sup>because she was</sup> being married and <sup>owned</sup> owning a house. <sup>But</sup> And the only way <sup>Dick</sup> he could persuade Pinkie to have 'school-girls' at a party ~~of hers~~ was to suggest helping with the money; she <sup>insisted</sup> insisted on fifty-fifty!

n.p. "An expensive way of finding out," said Dick, "that the girl, nice enough in other ways, <sup>had the whole thing built-in and was really a transvestist colonel!</sup> ~~was really a transvestist colonel with hair down his back!~~" He added to Pinkie, "But I've always been a good loser. Name your price!"

<sup>said,</sup> ~~epic~~ "You know bloody well what that party cost, you mean bastard!" Pinkie

"Well," Hanni put in quietly, chuckling, "it was a bit ambiguous---"

"Why?" Pinkie looked crestfallen at her interference. Then they went into the arithmetic of it, <sup>with Pinkie working out the sum on paper.</sup> ~~Pinkie had given different figures on two occasions, it seemed.~~ At the end of the sum there was more bitterness.

"Oh, all right, forget the whole bloody <sup>business!</sup> transaction!" Pinkie cried, throwing down her pencil.

"It's perfectly simple," Hanni said, "he pays you half of that." And she pointed to the sum.

"But that's only half the boose, and we had food and Christ knows what else, apart from the breakage---!" She gave Dick a hard glance. "Yes, Mr Pollocke, the breakage <sup>!"</sup>!"

"But I only agreed to pay half the boose," Dick replied. And he stuck to it. <sup>he said</sup> ~~He had laid it down that he was only going to pay half the boose;~~ and Pinkie had put her seal on the transaction by not complaining before---it was now <sup>too late!</sup> two months afterwards, <sup>he said</sup> Pinkie lost and Dick paid the sum; and the bad feeling passed over slowly. But it led Pinkie

to accuse Hanni of 'stirring up an atmosphere'. She said that Dick would have paid up like a lamb if she hadn't been 'at him'. Hanni denied this, smiling quietly. And Pinkie went on to say that it was about time Hanni left her 'village' and came out in western civilisation for a change, where people spoke their minds. Hanni went mute and didn't appear at the house for two or three days. This gave Dick a chance to renew his attentions to Linger-Longer, because she appeared only at the house, with 'Ginger', never at the clubs or even at the café in Commercial Road. <sup>She</sup> Dick <sup>arm</sup> sat on the edge of her chair in the music-room, talking to her softly, and one could see that slowly she was taking a new attitude towards herself, under <sup>his influence...</sup> the power of his words. She came <sup>to the house</sup> looking tidier <sup>as a result,</sup> with her hair <sup>really curled</sup> beautifully <sup>done</sup> instead of being <sup>just done</sup> ~~held together~~ <sup>up in</sup> by a ribbon. Then Pinkie and Hanni appeared one day, brought together again by one of those silent feminine miracles---they'd met somewhere in town by accident. This was followed by new confidences between them, inevitably, and Hanni heard what had been going on <sup>at the house</sup> between Dick and Linger-Longer. But she only laughed. Dick had managed to get the girl out, after all; they were to go to the theatre together.

*S. 11/2/41* British troops were sent to Eubath after all, and Moscow sent <sup>a</sup> another note, more restrained than the <sup>previous</sup> one to the sheikh, to London. The headline this time was 'Sheikh Digging In'; there would be an international <sup>c</sup> 'show-down', the papers said; the time had come to put a stop to Russian encroachments, by means of 'technical advisers', into the Middle East. It looked bad. The sheikh was confined to his palace, with his bodyguard. But there was still no sign of sympathetic trouble in Basrah or anywhere near by.

There was now every reason why he should prolong his leave. His life had just begun to construct itself on an exciting basis; also in deference to his parents he ought to stay---he really couldn't dash off without going over to see them at least once, and there wouldn't be time if he did go back; and he must know something definite about Pinkie,

which he didn't yet; and there was this crisis---it wouldn't be very comfortable/sitting in Basrah while it lasted, even though there were no students in the city. He could ask for/leave on compassionate grounds.

He thought with a <sup>smile</sup> ~~laugh~~ that he couldn't very well go along to Nevinson and say, 'I think my wife's sleeping with somebody else. Will you give me

h.p.  
ital.

another two weeks to make sure?' But that day something quite remarkable happened---for him, mystical. After this, he thought, how could <sup>we</sup> ~~he~~ doubt that we lived in a kind of sky, with all sorts of strange happenings we know nothing about going on round us, with an order behind them we <sup>couldn't</sup> ~~can't~~ foresee?

h.p.

It was a letter marked 'Express' ~~on the envelope~~ from Nevinson confirming what Dick had said. They wanted a report from him on the Basrah office, in view of the reconstruction of the Middle Eastern facilities that would be taking place over the next five years. It had occurred to them, the letter went on, that the files in London would be more useful to him than those in Basrah, and therefore they had decided to ask him to prolong his leave, which would count as normal duty from the time of the expiry of his official leave, for another month, in order to prepare it. They had taken this decision with the crisis in mind as well: they had information that British personnel might be asked to leave <sup>Basrah</sup> ~~xxx~~ soon as a precaution, in any case. They would let him know further, but the extra month would give him a breathing space, and it was hoped that by then the crisis would have blown over. If the situation permitted, Tomlinson of the Port of Beirut would fly over and see how things were in the Basrah office. A secretary would be put at Granville's disposal in London, also a small office in the Middle East department for a week, during which time he might like to go through the files. Would he care to drop in to arrange the disposal of these files? He would be expected to 'give full rein' to any suggestions for changes which might be in his mind; and meanwhile they didn't believe he ~~xxxx~~ need suffer any anxiety about his office in Basrah, it could quite well run on its own steam for a few weeks, especially as this was the time of the

worst heat; 'Steam is probably the right word for it!' Nevinson wrote. Granville was thrilled with the chatty tone. What a compliment, ~~to him~~ <sup>to him</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~way~~ <sup>way</sup>! ~~He~~ <sup>He</sup> make a report---and suggest changes! It might even be true, he now thought, that he was going to get the Beirut office, as Glenning had said. The letter ended hoping that this didn't interfere with his plans and repeating that the month wouldn't count ~~his~~ <sup>as official</sup> leave ~~at all~~. He went out and bought a bottle of wine at once, and drank it ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> one sitting, alone in the house. Then he ~~phoned~~ <sup>phoned</sup> Dick and told him everything. It made him soured really in charge of his own life; he could talk with a level voice about how he was going to stay on in London, and with the same level voice later he might suggest to Dick another evening at The Marquis. He now had the official stamp to take a holiday he'd meant to take in any case! He told Pinkie when she came in, and she looked at him with a new air of belief, as if she now knew why he'd been circumspect about his passage back; she asked him what sort of man Nevinson was in a tone that suggested a special, ~~very~~ professional relation between ~~the two men~~ <sup>the two of them</sup>. "What about the air ticket back," she asked, "you can get that changed, can't you?" She had a more penetrating look as if trying to find out whether he'd actually ~~done~~ <sup>tried</sup> it; she was quite still for a moment, her eyes set on him. "Oh, that'll be easy enough!" he said, and turned away.

There was also a money-problem which was now solved. The parties and casual evenings at the house had cost quite a lot, even ~~though~~ <sup>with</sup> Pinkie ~~was~~ earning as well. They rarely got through an evening ~~now~~ without buying a bottle or two of wine. But now he'd be able to go along to the office and ask for an advance on the month, instead of waiting to collect it at the bank in Basrah; what plans had he had for money, supposing his ~~pic~~ leave had expired and he'd simply stayed on? He didn't know! Providence had extended a helping hand. Also he'd be getting his overseas allowance in the normal way---that would pay for a drop of 'overseas wine', <sup>too!</sup> he thought. Yes, a very nice time was about to be had by our little clerk!

15.

CHAPTER 15

He wrote to Mohammed asking him what the feeling was like in Basrah, and whether he thought there'd be rioting. He wondered what information Nevinson had got hold of, <sup>about the possible withdrawal of British personnel.</sup> The papers said that the sheikh's English <sup>A. D. C.</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>1</sup> some papers called him 'Rubath's public relations officer'---was ~~in the private~~ <sup>2</sup> employ of the sheikh, and had been ~~so~~ <sup>3</sup> for the last twenty years; they were close personal friends <sup>of</sup> and the sheikh <sup>and the latter</sup> never took an important step without ~~consulting~~ <sup>4</sup> him. He was the <sup>sheikh's</sup> mind <sup>5</sup> behind the sheikh, his name was John Creed, and an editorial said ~~that~~ <sup>think</sup> it was strange to ~~reflect~~ <sup>6</sup> that ~~perhaps one man~~ <sup>7</sup> who was in the position of a private tutor---this was how he'd got to know the sheikh, teaching him English---had 'precipitated the world into a major crisis, and that this could at any time become a war,' <sup>8</sup> though if the British government behaves with caution ~~it can be avoided.~~ <sup>9</sup> Journalists ~~had~~ <sup>10</sup> tried to get statements out of Mr Creed but unsuccessfully. He stayed in the palace with the sheikh. ~~Nobody knew where the loyalties of the army lay: some people said that most officers were behind the sheikh, and some said that if the two factions united, the nationalist officers and the communists outside the army, the sheikh would be out.~~ <sup>11</sup> One paper said that there was 'mounting American feeling' against Mr Creed, ~~apparently, he'd taken on the aspects of a George III minister; it was him or the spirit of independence.~~ <sup>12</sup> A London paper had a cartoon <sup>of</sup> with an Englishman dressed up as an Arab looking out of a palace-window on to rows of guards with fixed bayonets, and underneath

were the words, 'The Sheikh of Rubath de-Creed a state of emergency.'  
Cases of champagne had been seen going into the palace and a paper asked how far, since strict Muslims were forbidden liquor, this was 'in the interests of the sheikh's religious Creed.' (Some people said ~~with~~ Creed had been converted to Islam.)

Then some of the rebel-officers were executed at the sheikh's orders after a perfunctory trial. The papers argued about whether Creed was behind this, and some of them said that the <sup>British</sup> government should be pressed to exercise more influence on the sheikh, since they had put troops in the area, and to <sup>help</sup> get Creed out. But that was impossible <sup>because</sup> since Rubath was an independent state, and Creed was in the sheikh's private employ. People also suspected that the government was behind Creed in a subtle way, and that Creed had been against the executions and after hours of argument with the sheikh had got the concession of per<sup>f</sup>unctory trails, so that at least the public-relations side would be covered. There was ~~small~~ <sup>a little</sup> rioting all over the country, but ~~the~~ British troops held aloof and left discipline to the local police and ~~the~~ loyal elements in the army. An illegal newspaper was started by a rebel faction in Rubath and surprised everybody by its first issue <sup>because it</sup> which <sup>was</sup> moderate <sup>in tone</sup> and sober; ~~there were no wild denunciations.~~ It clearly belonged to ~~the army-faction, of officers; there were also lawyers and judges involved, insofar as the country had any.~~ The editor <sup>said</sup> of the ~~new~~ paper was supposed to be a doctor, one of the best surgeons in the country. This put Russia on the side of the angels, and America tried to join the angels quickly, with a statement of 'horror' at the executions. The British were left holding the baby, and the clamour from Moscow grew now that the chance of a war with America was less. There was a demonstration outside the British Embassy in Moscow. The illegal newspaper in Rubath called for a parliament, universal suffrage and the right of ~~habeas corpus~~ <sup>habeas</sup>; it used the terms of English liberalism, not the ~~terms~~ <sup>words</sup> ~~currently~~ shared between Russia and America 'freedom', 'anti-colonialism', 'democracy', ~~if~~ <sup>human</sup> rights, ~~if~~ <sup>freedom</sup> and independence and

Kal

and 'justice', which suggested, one paper said, that Creed might have been behind that too. <sup>People said</sup> There was another note from Moscow which ended <sup>was</sup> with what sounded like an ultimatum. It said that measures might have to be taken to protect 'democratic elements' in Rubath, <sup>this,</sup> which the papers said, was a threat to start a long war <sup>from</sup> there by means of 'volunteers' armed by Russia, which would turn the whole of the Middle East upside-down and threaten the oil interests; <sup>fields,</sup> this, the threat to the oil suddenly brought England and America closer together, and there was a joint note <sup>from them</sup> that Rubath would have to be protected.

Granville began to hope that it <sup>all</sup> would peter out in <sup>America</sup> this way, with Russia not wanting to risk a war with America, and the other side not wanting to risk <sup>the</sup> their oil. It had <sup>was now</sup> boiled down to a moral question, <sup>one</sup> paper said, as to whether the revolt in the army was a sincere movement of reform, as the illegal newspaper suggested it was, or something provoked by Russian agents, <sup>the</sup> ~~either~~ responsible people in Rubath had been saying that the ~~sheikh refused to recognise~~ ~~any reform-party or~~ ~~tolerate a political move-~~

ment of any kind, and that British elements, including the British legation, <sup>The British</sup> had never recognised the possibility of <sup>social</sup> change and had clung to the sheikh <sup>unreasonably,</sup> as the only serious power in the country; <sup>more,</sup> they had snubbed and poo-  
<sup>the</sup> pohed/liberal-minded people, some of whom had got their education, and

their politics, <sup>and</sup> from the London School of Economics; This had left the best part of the country's talent well outside the area of government authority, <sup>the</sup> nursing a grievance because they weren't treated as grown-up <sup>People</sup> people. They had virtually been forced into the rebel-camp, if not forced to take Russian advate and perhaps Russian money and arms. How big a part Mr Creed had played in that nobody knew. His silence, the paper added, <sup>the</sup> (the journalists really seemed to hate his silence more than anything else) <sup>about him</sup> was fast becoming an 'insult'; but perhaps he was 'busy' with the cases of champagne that had arrived.

Granville's hope that it would all peter out came to nothing, because <sup>started</sup> Russia suddenly began massing troops along her Persian border. It looked as if there was going to be the <sup>usual</sup> fainting

of a ~~war~~ crisis,

and marionette-play, with troop-movements and the recall of ministers from holiday, <sup>which</sup> ~~that had become familiar since the end of the war.~~ London looked different. There was a cold wind and the skies were darker, giving the streets a frightfully bleak look. The newspapers were coming out in extra editions, sometimes with a few lines of mediocre news dressed up in sensational headlines. There were piles of them all over the kitchen. Either Granville brought one in or Dick or Glenning did. It felt as if the inside of life had been taken out, leaving <sup>the</sup> only a shell. Little things like getting up in the morning and making a cup of tea, <sup>which</sup> ~~that had been a pleasure and even~~ <sup>had</sup> seemed <sup>before</sup> ~~important,~~ <sup>felt</sup> ~~now~~ looked hollow and irrelevant; there was always this greater thing going on outside, like a vast ~~sheet~~ sheet held up against the sky, ~~keeping~~ keeping out the light. Yet the whole thing was being played out in the mind. Nothing altered. Everybody went to the same work every day and did the same things. Nothing looked different. Yet the thing was going on; it was mounting, in its ghostly fashion.

Hanni had to work overtime---the Middle East section, she said, was working round the clock. She brought her things to the house and stayed in the bedroom downstairs; sometimes she came in after midnight, ~~sallow~~ and exhausted. She said there was a real possibility of war; everybody was worried and they were thinking of calling up the emergency reserve. Granville wondered whether he was one of these, and tried to imagine what it would be like <sup>in the army</sup> going into uniform again. ~~He would be steadier than he was~~ <sup>in those days,</sup> ~~perhaps~~ <sup>perhaps</sup> ~~or perhaps not so.~~ <sup>It</sup> There might be a relief, ~~in~~ <sup>it</sup> for him, discovering the open air again; ~~with that familiar yearning for~~ ~~peace and home which since it was never fulfilled, put an ecstatic light~~ ~~round everything,~~ and the closeness of death that put life in the proper place along the span of space and time, not in the usual false light of ~~civic~~ <sup>peace,</sup> safety, so that it got back <sup>its</sup> the mystery, ~~it must have had before our epochs.~~ How strange ~~it would be to feel the rough khaki~~ ~~on his legs again, and to~~ ~~touch the butt of a rifle, warm where the wood was and icy-cold on the metal.~~

~~He~~ He couldn't believe it would happen, and yet he could; everyone seemed in a doped state, believing nothing and everything. Hanni said that the door of 10 Downing Street opened and closed dozens of times an hour, with messengers running in and out. She knew for a fact that reinforcements had been sent to the Middle East, but it was hush-hush; they were embarking at Southampton now for Malta and Cyprus. In a way, she said, she was enjoying it. There were endless cups of tea, <sup>in the office</sup> and everybody was agreeable <sup>to</sup> and helped each other out. People joked all the time. ~~There were people she was speaking to for the first time after years in the same office, and there were all sorts of little surprises about people's characters; it seemed to bring everybody out.~~ A man she'd thought stiff like a piece of clockwork <sup>had</sup> brought <sup>one</sup> in a bottle of whisky <sup>was always</sup> in the evening and flirted with the secretaries. He was taking <sup>Hanni herself</sup> ~~her~~ out <sup>out soon.</sup> on the weekend. This was the first intimation, for Granville, that she entertained thoughts of going out with <sup>other</sup> men. Dick smiled when she told him, and christened the man 'Joe Clockwork'.

There were long political arguments in the kitchen, which the women sat through in silence, looking pale, the life drained out of them. Irritation started between Dick and Granville again: they always seemed to be on opposite sides. When the argument got rough Pinkie would put her hands up to her ears and say, "Why can't you argue without shouting, for God's sake?" This was addressed particularly to Glenning and Granville. The young man called <sup>Gerald</sup> ~~Richard~~ with the pleasant face, <sup>round one evening</sup> came and said he was volunteering <sup>for the army.</sup> it would 'make a break', he said. But <sup>later</sup> he found one couldn't volunteer <sup>just</sup> for a crisis, and ~~he would have~~ <sup>five years in the</sup> army would have been a longer break than he was looking for. He began coming round every evening, and drank as he'd never done <sup>in his life.</sup> before. As quickly, however, he stopped and was once more the pleasant young man who <sup>came to the house</sup> called round once a week or so: and he said his threat to volunteer <sup>apart from giving himself a 'scare'</sup> had got him a rise at the plastics-firm.

For Dick the <sup>crisis</sup> situation in Rubath was clear. The sheikh was an unjust and backward ruler; the rational thing to do was to remove him, ~~he said~~

He was preventing the development of his own country and tying it down to a foreign influence, namely, Britain. He was therefore anachronism. <sup>3</sup> "But what about the Russians?" Granville asked. Dick <sup>said</sup> replied

without hesitation, "If the Russians get the upper hand, good luck to them! But I doubt if they will". Behind their arguments there was a reluctance all the time: they both hated talking about it; the words were hard, without colour, little grey pellets; ~~but~~ it all fell out of their mouths like ash. They were victims. They would both much rather have talked about something else, and agreed, <sup>with each other</sup> but this had a relentless hold on them, and they stuck at each other with a grimness that seemed to come from outside them both.

<sup>he</sup> Dick said that perhaps destiny required the Russians there, in the Middle East; it was doubtful if the reform movement <sup>in Rubath have ed</sup> could exist, or the illegal newspaper been published, without Russian ~~help~~ help. "Perhaps," Dick ~~he~~ added, "Russian sympathy was enough." It was a kind of historical materialist argument supported by ideals: history would dispose of the sheikh---it was only a matter of time---and the ideal which justified his disposal was that of civilised government; therefore British troops should get out to leave history to take its inevitable course there. "But suppose it produces

less civilised government?" Granville asked him. "It couldn't," Dick <sup>replied</sup> replied. "At least another government wouldn't cut off people's hands for

stealing." "It might," said Granville. "I don't think so," said Dick. <sup>added that he</sup> He didn't believe the Russians were behind the revolt, ~~he added~~, but he did

believe ~~that~~ the British were behind Creed. He said he based this on the fact that the Middle East had been an area of British influence for more than a century, and that Russia had always been kept out. But sometimes in zones of influence people fought for a just government, and this was what they were doing in Rubath. Granville's answer was that it had nothing to

do with justice or, indeed, with any ideals! "What is it, then?" Dick asked him. ~~He was baffled for a reply. He said he didn't know enough about what was going on; but it was quite possible that army-men in charge~~

government would be just as bad as the sheikh.

h.l.

"I'm surprised to see you supporting nationalists and military men," he ~~added~~ <sup>Dick replied</sup> "Where does that fit in with civilised government?" ~~How was it to be reconciled with Dick's previous argument that it didn't matter if the Russians took over there?~~

"I didn't say I believed in nationalism! I don't necessarily say people ought to govern themselves," Dick ~~replied~~ <sup>said</sup>. "All I say is that they should be governed as they want to be governed."

itach

~~It was a subtle argument, but Granville quickly brushed it aside.~~

n.p.

"The people aren't involved at all!" he said. "Where do they come in?"

"Ultimately they're involved."

"They're all sitting quietly in their villages, half-starved! Don't you believe it! It's never the people who start these movements!"

~~So it went on, one sometimes more subtle than the other, then vice-versa.~~

r.p.

This last remark put Granville <sup>own</sup> on to a clearer conception of his position.

He decided to take ~~it~~ <sup>this</sup> as the opening theme of his report for T.I.M., for which he'd been casting around in his mind. A middle-class was coming into existence in the Middle East---doctors, lawyers, teachers, army-men, civil servants; ~~this was the most important political factor.~~

e.c.

~~They wanted power, and they were excluded from it by often illiterate men, like the sheikh of Rubath, who had none of the qualities by which they themselves had advanced.~~

itab

The situation had nothing to do with ideals; the political slogans were the same as those which accompanied the rise of any middle-class---in the case of Rubath they were the same as in England <sup>1830s, over a hundred</sup> during the first three decades of <sup>years ago</sup> the nineteenth century. The 'people' had nothing to do with it. The

leaders of the riots were students usually, and they were supported by the officer-class. The 'people' were attracted to middle-class politics by the promise of a higher living standard, <sup>that was all.</sup> although, he said, it was possible

itab

~~that this would go down for a time under middle-class government, which might concentrate <sup>first</sup> on arms and a strong police-force. That had happened~~

in England: ~~the misery among the 'people' was~~ <sup>always</sup> ~~frightful in the first~~  
 fifty years or so of middle-class government. <sup>This had</sup> The same happened in Russia,  
 when the middle-class inherited power through communism. There was first  
 the bitter struggle to put up the factories and produce goods for low prices;  
 then the new organised life began to show returns. He noted this down, for  
 the first paragraph of the report: he would ~~say after that something about~~  
 important fact for any trading company in the Middle East to know. He  
 didn't quite <sup>see</sup> know yet how <sup>what</sup> he would make the connection <sup>was</sup> between <sup>this</sup> the new  
 middle-class, of <sup>whom</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>and T.I.M.</sup> ~~probably~~ Mohammed was one, ~~if he stopped to think about~~  
~~it~~ <sup>and then</sup> but it had resolved some of the confusions in his mind. He didn't  
~~however~~ offer it to Dick as an argument. For one thing, he didn't want  
 them all to cry in a chorus, "Oh, for God's sake! That word 'middle-class'!  
 Can't you give it a rest?" And for another thing he didn't want the idea  
 exploded; he wanted to make it stronger first. So he argued with Dick  
 without bringing up his main reserve.

Dick said that England's day was over as far as the 'big political  
 plums' were concerned, and that this would make England a nicer place to live  
 in. The big imperialists these days, he added, were the Americans; they  
 would cash in from our <sup>discomfort</sup> ~~discomfort~~ in the Middle East, and they were the  
 other cause of it---apart from Russia---in any case. Glenning said to this  
 that the last thing America was was an empire. ~~"What is it, then?" Dick~~  
~~asked.~~ ~~"An attitude to Europe,"~~ Glenning replied with a laugh. <sup>Glenning said</sup> ~~He added~~  
<sup>He said</sup> that America had a temporary ~~political~~ hold on the western world because  
 of the collapse of so many countries in the war---~~America just sat back and~~  
~~handed out the money and developed the inventions that came from abroad, and~~  
~~so forth.~~ But that wouldn't last, <sup>America</sup> ~~It wouldn't last because she~~ had no  
 serious aspirations abroad, ~~and this was so because she was too busy 'trying~~  
~~to produce a new type of human creature.~~ <sup>being!</sup> ~~America was a moral quantity,~~  
~~not a political one.~~ Dick chuckled; he was always genial when Glenning  
 talked; the urbane tone appealed to him---Glenning never spoke with venom

on propaganda  
~~the~~

The arguments got more and more abstract between the three men until Hanni and Pinkie put a stop to it with the biggest party they'd ever had in the house. There was dancing, and much else, in every room, and it went on until dawn Saturday morning, with couples sleeping in each other's arms in the corridor outside the music-room.

Hanni discovered that all the time she'd been sleeping at Chaworth Road Dick had been entertaining Linger-Longer down at Hampton Court: he confirmed that <sup>Linger-Longer</sup> she couldn't even cook an egg; he said <sup>she'd been</sup> ~~she~~ some tripe in the kitchen and <sup>she asked him if</sup> ~~she thought~~ it was a foam-rubber seat for the car, not that he had a car. "That's right," he'd told her, "I'm partial to foam-rubber seats. Ford turns out a very tasty one, It goes well with mashed potatoes and Brussel sprouts." Believe it or not, he said, she was <sup>a</sup> the daughter of <sup>the proletariat</sup> working people: she'd told him that until she was fifteen she'd thought tea came straight out of the tap and only had to be boiled up. "How her mum managed to hide her <sup>from her</sup> from the facts of the kitchen) I don't know," he said.

"What about the other facts of life?" Hanni asked in a dry voice.

"How does she manage with those?"

<sup>Dick</sup> He hesitated, giving her a long, twinkling look, and replied, "With a few more evening-classes she <sup>wouldn't</sup> ~~shouldn't~~ be too bad."

Pinkie said afterwards that Dick had fewer escapades than he claimed credit for: he only liked the 'atmosphere'. Linger-Longer wouldn't dream of letting a man touch her, she said. But Dick told him the opposite, in confidence. He said she'd taught him a few tricks, anyway: "Women always get other women wrong in that respect, old sport."

Unexpectedly, Creed came into the news again. He had the hotel-room of an English journalist searched and his telegrams and ~~his~~ carbon-copies of his articles photographed. He even authorised <sup>the police</sup> to use his name when they forced their way in. It was a very Middle Eastern thing to <sup>do,</sup> happen, and not likely <sup>to be understood in the rest of the world.</sup> There was an outcry at once--- the freedom of the press had been violated! Then the public-relations

office of Rubath, <sup>which</sup> ~~as it had come to be known since the crisis began~~ it was set up at the palace and really meant ~~the~~ Creed <sup>published</sup> ~~revealed that~~ the text of ~~the~~ telegram from the journalist's newspaper ~~had asked~~ <sup>which</sup> ~~asked~~ for violent stories wherever possible, and if they had a sex-element so much the better. 'Anything with blood in it,' the telegram said. <sup>added,</sup> There had been ~~small riots recently,~~ always in the capital ~~they were some demonstrations with scuffling and sometimes a shot fired.~~ <sup>And</sup> ~~But they were spreading;~~ people said they were being staged by ~~one political interest or other.~~ Creed then put out ~~an announcement~~ that he would talk to the press in the palace ~~on a specified day,~~ but he would read a prepared text and not answer questions. Everybody wondered what this meant. Would he say something to tip the balance of the crisis? Perhaps he would offer terms to the rebels or announce his own resignation---it was known that he was now an embarrassment to the British government. The day came, <sup>But</sup> and the first reports <sup>were</sup> ~~were~~ <sup>un</sup> ~~very~~ interesting. The morning paper said that Creed had provided the 'unsolicited information' that journalists had arrived in Rubath from all over the world by air and that they had 'more or less taken over' the only two hotels in the country, the Rubath National and the Tigris. 'After this courageous sally into common knowledge', the paper said, he ~~had~~ then told the conference that <sup>certain</sup> ~~the~~ eye-witness accounts <sup>put out by</sup> ~~put out by~~ the journalists, <sup>whose room had been searched</sup> ~~whose room had been searched~~ weren't in fact eye-witness accounts at all, <sup>but had been</sup> ~~but had been~~ <sup>bar of</sup> ~~written in the~~ bar of the Tigris, <sup>at the telephone,</sup> ~~at the telephone,~~ a number of telephones had been installed in the hotel; and in any case, Creed said, the accounts, eye-witness or not, were untrue. Most of the papers said no more than this, but Dick came in with the whole text of Creed's speech. No wonder the papers were furious! Attacks on Creed had already started <sup>as a result</sup> ~~as a result~~ Creed had really let himself go. He said <sup>that so-called</sup> ~~the~~ eye-witness accounts had grown out of a scrap between a policeman and a native due to a donkey in the middle of the main street, and this had been built up into a major riot. A crowd had gathered, ~~and~~ some of the police had thought it was political and fired some shots in the

n.p.

n.p.

air; ~~and~~ this in turn had excited the crowd. <sup>Creed</sup> He said the news was <sup>always</sup> being built up in this way. The ~~two~~ <sup>of</sup> bars ~~the~~ Rubath National, ~~he said,~~ held most of the <sup>so-called</sup> ~~would-be~~ respectable correspondents, who usually call themselves, I think, 'Diplomatic Correspondents', while the Tigris <sup>had</sup> ~~harboured~~ the 'tabloids'--- the two bars were doing better business than at any time in the <sup>a</sup> last twenty years, 'since I, in fact, advised the sheikh to put them up.' The chief of police had reported to him that ~~on not one single occasion when there had been a demonstration or skirmish in the streets,~~ <sup>not one of these journalists had been present at</sup> in any part of the country, ~~had a white face been seen.~~ That was a measure of the truth of these ~~eye-witness accounts.~~ <sup>Creed said,</sup> Anyway, he added, these demonstrations, ~~being staged,~~ took place too suddenly to allow ~~time for~~ correspondents, 'slowed-down by the pints of booze, ~~in them,~~ to get to their cars and drive ten, twenty and sometimes fifty miles.' ~~Most of these 'boys', he said, hadn't a thought in their heads if their despatches were anything to go by, and not only this but they had no moral concern for the country, at all.~~ <sup>rather</sup> They didn't even have an interest in it.' 'They come out here with their ~~priggish,~~ <sup>bloody</sup> degenerate little faces,' he said, 'and think they can size the situation up in a couple of minutes when they can't even talk the ~~bloody,~~ <sup>even</sup> language and have never set foot ~~in the country, and usually in any~~ <sup>or</sup> ~~any~~ <sup>a</sup> Middle East country ~~of~~ <sup>some years</sup> before!' They think they can tell me how the place should be run when they hadn't got a serious bloody thought in their heads, when they can't hardly read a book, and when they're never alone! They haven't been trained for anything, they live on a lot of bloody tittle-tattle, and they're the people forming ~~opinion,~~ <sup>politics</sup> as it's called, all over the world! No wonder ~~government every~~ <sup>where has turned into</sup> a cheap and nasty public-relations racket. And if I'd laid on my public-relations properly and handed you booze free of charge, you'd have all been eating out of my hand by now, the whole bloody lot of you!' The paper said Creed had stumbled into the vernacular---'can't hardly read a book'---perhaps because his education at Oxford had been <sup>oblique.</sup> 'curtailed'; this was a polite paper, and its personal attacks had to be)   
 It meant that Creed had been sent down for homosexuality. →

'And all those right-thinking clergymen and people in England,' Creed had continued, 'who don't like the sheikh of Rubath, ~~and~~ while very pure and all that, <sup>in fact</sup> are the dupes of a <sup>lot</sup> set of drunken, ~~and~~ <sup>bloody</sup> wash-outs---! Well,' he cried when there were interruptions, 'even if you're not all drunk you should be, to sluice out the rotten thoughts in your brains! This crisis would have die down a <sup>week</sup> ~~month~~ ago if it hadn't been for you lot! <sup>The situation</sup> ~~The situation~~ in Rubath is the same as ~~the situation~~ in any Middle East country, no worse and a good deal better than some, and everything'd be all right here if you people hadn't settled on us like a lot of bloody blowflies, to make money out of us, and <sup>without</sup> ~~if there weren't~~ boobies all over the world to take your dirt seriously. <sup>you wouldn't be able to do it!</sup> And I can tell you how most of you get your news, too, in case the rest of the world doesn't know---! He said that nearly all the news came from <sup>u native</sup> Rubath/reporterks, that meant natives of Rubath, <sup>over the phone</sup> ~~over the phone~~. <sup>personally</sup> Some of these reporters, he said, knew the leaders of the rebel movement and they'd come to <sup>a</sup> useful arrangement---for which they were paid to feed the foreign press with stories every day even if <sup>nothing happened</sup> ~~there weren't any~~. 'Every time a stone goes through somebody's window there's a story,' he said, 'and you're all sitting in the bars slopping the whisky down your gullets waiting for the stuff to come in. What a moral life! And you've got the guts to hand out morality in your daily newspapers! I'd like to see any ~~one~~ of you ~~spend~~ spend a week in this palace---I mean off-season, when we haven't the pleasure of entertaining riff-faff from all over the world---without going off your ~~bloody~~ nuts from boredom and loneliness! Well, I've stuck it for twenty years and I've enjoyedx it. I respect these people, and I admire the sheikh.' Well,' he went on, 'I'll tell you about <sup>native</sup> these/reporterks. There was one little skirmish last week that was prettily staged by the interested parties and the story all about it got through <sup>to</sup> the Tigris bar before it actually hapxened. These Rubath reporters are an even more illiterate and unscupulous lot than you! They <sup>are</sup> are the sons of doctors and lawyers who wanted their children to inherit a better world---well, they did, they

itals

got their better world, they've lined their pockets out of the misery of the people. And I can tell you these boys know no more about the lives of ordinary people in this country than you errant knights of the Tigris bar do. Two of them have got ~~the equivalent of what used to be called the general school certificate,~~ which any bloody fool could pass at the age of fifteen, at least in my day, though what the kids of today are capable of I don't know, especially if they're your kids, and one of them has <sup>hasn't got anything!</sup> got the external Cambridge certificate. I know, because I taught ~~them~~ <sup>them</sup> myself. You may have noticed that their mistakes in grammar are the same as mine. Well, some of you might have noticed---the diplomatic correspondents; the others, I suppose, ~~phone~~ <sup>phone</sup> their stuff across to save <sup>themselves</sup> the shame of putting ~~the stuff~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~into words and~~ <sup>down a paper!</sup> revealing ~~even to themselves their miserable dullness.~~ Those reporters, I repeat, are layabouts and raggamuffins, and I should be very surprised if any of them had a thought beyond this evening's sex. Creed ended by saying that the receipts of the two hotel bars were unparalleled, and that since he had shares in these hotels himself he wouldn't come off too badly. He was thinking of setting up a fund for the religious conversion of journalists everywhere to Islam. There were interruptions all the way through his speech, but he showed no awareness of this and spoke through a microphone, with a stout bodyguard standing in front of him. The laughter was sometimes uproarious, and at the end some of the journalists ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> going 'For he's a jolly good fellow.' When he'd finished talking he got <sup>up</sup> abruptly and without another glance at them strode through the beads of a doorway and was lost to sight.

It didn't command the headlines. Creed was a minor figure now, ~~that~~ <sup>the crisis was in earnest</sup>. Dick read the speech out, swinging in his chair, and everyone enjoyed it immensely. It was the first real human voice of the crisis, breaking through the bleak, metallic sheet of the daily news that hid the light. Pinkie and Hanni were thrilled by it, and laughed and clapped their hands. The papers treated it like a music-hall joke ~~on the whole one~~.

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n. p.

could see what a good-natured person he was really, they said, in a little  
twinkle in his eyes. Creed was discredited, and nobody paid him any fur-  
ther attention as a serious element in the crisis. →

A few papers published amused biographical notes about him with a malicious undertone, ~~he was a~~  
~~homosexual, he'd been sent down from Oxford for practices which, luckily for~~  
~~him, the parents of the boys concerned, hadn't brought into the law courts,~~  
and he was now a Muslim. He was teetotaler and he spoke fluent Arabic---but

h.p. in the way these things were mentioned they didn't seem virtues. [Apparent-  
ly, ~~he~~ <sup>Creed had</sup> sent a note along to 'one of the most sombre diplomatic correspond-  
ents', as he called him, in the Rubath <sup>N</sup>ational, after the press-conference,  
saying that in view of the money they were putting into his pockets via the  
hotel-bars, would they take into consideration as well that he had shares in  
some of the local brothels, and perhaps patronise them under a police-escort  
which he would be glad to provide? This wasn't reported in the papers;  
Dick brought ~~it~~ in, having got it from somebody in the Middle East depart-  
ment. Journalists had nick-named ~~him~~ <sup>Creed</sup> 'the queen of Rubath', he said.

A letter came from Mohammed. He said there had been a few quiet  
arrests in the last few days and that there were more police <sup>on</sup> the streets  
than he'd ever <sup>seen</sup> remembered before. The communists were biding their time;  
they were plentiful and armed. One day they would strike, <sup>he added.</sup> There was a  
heavy police-guard outside the Mesopotamia and also the British consulate.  
But otherwise nothing had changed. He went to the garden of the Mesopotamia  
as usual in the evening, and sat swinging in one of the hammocks; 'I miss  
l.c. you too much, my dear,' he added; A man and his son <sup>had to Basrah</sup> came from a village  
a hundred miles away, on foot, and found <sup>the</sup> daughter of their family working in  
one of the <sup>a</sup> brothels, and to wipe <sup>out</sup> away the dishonour they <sup>had made her walk along</sup> ~~had put her on the~~  
<sup>her</sup> railway track leading towards home and followed behind, <sup>then given</sup> giving her little  
<sup>with daggers all the way,</sup> cuts in her back until she collapsed and died. He said everyone was talk-  
ing about Rubath and Mr Creed in the cafés. The Arab saying, 'All English-  
men are spies' was repeated everywhere. There was no doubt that Mr Creed

was a spy for the British. 'I thank God you do not come back. It is too safe.' He meant 'unsafe'; this was a peculiar error he always made, omitting the negative prefixes. He said that at the trials of the rebel-officers in Rubath the defense-lawyer had been in the pay of the public prosecutor, and that they were both 'lovers' of Mr Creed. The last time Mohammed was in Rubath he lost 'two month at poker'; he always measured money by his monthly wage, at least when he talked to Granville, calling thirty pounds 'one month', sixty pounds 'two month' and so forth. "My dear," he would say, "I think I spend <sup>one</sup> a month on one outsider this afternoon. I have one good tip!"

There were fluent attacks on the government at meetings held in London. One of the labour party leaders asked what had happened to the plans set forth by the so-called Home Office in Rubath five years ago---plans for the building of at least fifteen schools and another hospital, for the establishment of a doctor in every village <sup>that had</sup> ~~with~~ a population of over five hundred people, and the irrigation of large areas of the desert to relieve the appalling high disease and mortality rate in the rural districts. What had happened to the money set aside for this purpose from the vast oil profits made by the sheikh? He had evidence that nothing whatsoever had been done! It was little wonder, he said, that some army officers were after the shiekh's blood! Were the British government prepared not simply to stand by and watch it but actively condone it, and <sup>to</sup> support with arms the murder of men whose only crime <sup>had been</sup> was a sense of social justice such as was accepted everywhere in Europe as elementary and unchallengeable? Was Britain going back instead of forward? And in whose name? In the name of the British people, who had not less than a hundred years before fought for all these rights that ~~the people of Rubath were~~ <sup>was</sup> now claiming, and won them? What mandate had the British government for its conduct?

Dick showed him this speech, but he <sup>Granville</sup> ~~said nothing~~, <sup>ed</sup> half shrugging it off. ~~He was getting the reputation, since he couldn't bring his real attitude to light in the midst of so many slogans and so much talk, for~~

→ The tone annoyed him. It was the usual slick indignation you read nowadays. 500.

~~supporting the status quo wherever it was. But he refused to talk in the terms that by now had become accepted, more or less, whenever a group formed in the kitchen. The sheikh was attacked, then Creed, then the British government: there was an established order of commendable opinion now. He felt if he joined in it would be a sign of weak character in him: he would be repeating something for group approval; so he was silent even when he agreed with what was said. He stuck to his guns, glowering silently.~~

'Ginger' asked him why he took such a pukka sahib attitude. He felt lonely and misunderstood: his skin prickled ~~constantly~~ as if he was under imminent physical attack, and he couldn't look at the others calmly when politics came up. There was an ambiguity on his side, he knew; he hadn't the calm of

*ital* ~~certainty.~~ He kept repeating ~~was~~ that it wasn't a matter of morals at all; it was just a matter of one group fighting another. But morality did sometimes <sup>come in.</sup> enter. The police fired on children one day, ~~luckily not~~ touching any of them. Where did Granville stand in that? He was nearly

*J* overwhelmed by the rightness and decency of their attitudes: but still he said that it wasn't the issue. He was pretty sure, in himself, that the executed rebel-officers had been moderate men, as the papers had said; he knew that doctors were deliberately kept out of the villages by the sheikh

*J* even when people were dying, ~~even~~ even when a child was dying, and that the doctors who disobeyed were called up to police headquarters and told by a bull-necked, illiterate police chief who had never known a just thought in his life that they were 'communists' and were in danger of being gaoled.

He knew, what Dick said repeatedly, that there were English <sup>people</sup> out there in the Middle East, in the embassies and oil-companies, who belonged to---or identified themselves with---a special and small class that had lost its position in England and found the life out there advantageous for keeping up

the old styles; ~~they were~~ <sup>Dick said</sup> unlike English people living in England, ~~Dick said~~ and they had made a complete muck-up of our relations with the Arabs since the war. Granville had met some of these people, Dick hadn't.

~~But still he didn't speak. He knew what Dick meant but he refused to nod his head, because of this feeling of group approval behind. He wouldn't say things in order to be commended!~~

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In nearly all the <sup>kitchen -</sup> discussions England was in the wrong. ~~The moral position of America or Russia was never questioned and quickly brushed aside - that wasn't the point, that wasn't the underlying passion.~~ And he took this for granted---it did seem natural that England should always be in the wrong. ~~Perhaps that was where his feeling of ambiguity lay.~~ ~~There was a certain vein of talk~~

<sup>England's</sup> ~~in which the name 'England' was the name of an unworthy state of affairs.~~ ~~It meant different things at different times---sometimes it meant bad weather, at others war-time restrictions which were still lingering on, sometimes bad colonial policies, at others stiffness of character, particularly of the sexual character,~~ ~~or it might be the conduct of the police.~~ But always <sup>at the back</sup> there was <sup>a</sup> ~~this~~ static descriptive term, pejorative, automatically so, as if everybody would naturally understand the inference, 'England'.

He'd become so used to it that when Linger-Longer and Ginger talked ~~like it~~ <sup>like this in the crisis</sup> during the crisis he found it natural, and quite a matter of course. ~~He'd done a fair amount of it himself in his time, as he knew---until he'd started to live abroad and feel nostalgia for the country, and until he'd come to feel that perhaps 'England' wasn't something that could be taken for granted but was as active and changing as what Mohammed talked about when he <sup>said</sup> used the words 'Arab nationalism'.~~ He'd railed and attacked in that vein before he left England. Yet, at the same time, he'd kept a sense of England: he'd told himself, in silence, that he was only talking about the violation of England's image, not the true England ~~which~~ he loved; only the corruption of England, not her being, which was in him and couldn't be taken away.

n.p. Did Linger-Longer and Giner feel the same, in silence? And he now found, to his surprise, that underneath his confusion and sense of ambiguity in this crisis lay a concern for England. It felt shameful, even. He might be laughed at. What a discovery---to feel concerned for England! An English-

~~me, too!~~ But what was going to happen if England was frittered away like this all the time? What would happen to their little group in the kitchen, and the language they talked? It was almost like a change of consciousness in him! He was awed at himself, with puzzlement and shame, at <sup>his</sup> ~~this~~ new position. ~~It seemed out of the question that any serious and thoughtful person should feel concern for England!~~ One didn't defend England! ~~Defend~~ <sup>Something</sup> ~~an~~ impregnable? ~~bastion of dullness?~~ The inference was that she could ~~look after herself well enough and could withstand~~ endless criticism! But how long <sup>could</sup> ~~would~~ that go on for? How much frittering away would she be able to bear, in her heart, from her own people? Hanni said one day that England had been the 'fairyland' of her childhood, when she was living in Kurdistan, and Pinkie replied that she couldn't understand how anybody could possibly regard England as a fairyland, with a laugh! But Hanni replied that it still was partly for her, especially when she walked round the streets of London alone, or stayed in the country. "Oh," Pinkie said to this as if it was <sup>s</sup> quite a different subject, "the country's lovely."

~~In Basrah it had been clear to him for the first time that he was an Englishman, in his goodness as well as his errors, whether he liked it or not. It was quite a discovery. As he walked through the streets he was an Englishman, recognisable as such.~~

~~It wasn't a matter of supporting Foreign Office policies in Rubath, he said to Pinkie one evening in the kitchen when they were alone. But what was going to happen if England was always wrong, and her rightness always a duty incumbent upon her that needn't be mentioned? Why was the name 'England' only mentioned when there was an unworthy state of affairs? It had so long been under attack by the lively and intelligent that it was now a conventional affectation. But how much more <sup>there</sup> could be frittered away? The Empire had withered away by common assent;/~~

With so much eaten away abroad, how much of this tiny island could be eaten away from inside as well? It wasn't a matter of politics. It was a matter of touching the heart and soul again, and listening, to find out what they were. 'England' was a convenient whipping-post for rising people at home and abroad, and ~~this coincided in an old feeling in~~<sup>for</sup> the country which now controlled the western world, America. It even produced a little reflex of shame to have a sense of concern.

The castigation was now common speech. It was a kind of easy journalese---even Linger-Linger and Lucy went in for it. It was fancy-dress thinking, and went well with wine and

made it seem that

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show was

flirting in the kitchen and staying up late. The talk ~~was always as if~~ being English was something <sup>separate</sup> ~~different~~ from what they <sup>all</sup> were. Ginger claimed, Irish ~~ancestry~~ anything foreign added a bit of colour! Foreigners ~~this~~

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~~was the inference~~ had the right to propose themselves to other people ~~so~~ to speak, in their nationality: as Arabs, as Frenchmen, as Cypriots or Chinese. ~~They had a certain exciting flow in their blood from nationality.~~

~~This flow of blood was separate from power and politics, quite distinct from the situation that existed in their countries; it wasn't an outward form at all;~~ When Linger-Longer said ~~English~~ 'a French boy' it had a special ring.

The word 'French' was enough to evoke it. 'Buddha' was exciting. 'Islam' was exciting. He <sup>had</sup> noticed how everyone's interest quickened when he talked about Basrah or the long trip he and Pinkie had taken to Krudistan <sup>in</sup> everyone except Hanni, who never wanted to see her home again. ~~Anything foreign had a glow.~~

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~~A marvellous glittering world lay outside England.~~ <sup>But</sup> Being 'English' didn't seem to mean the same as being a Frenchman or Arab. it didn't have the strange

~~flow of blood, the ever-present, brooding consciousness that had grown out of the past.~~ He <sup>had</sup> began to wonder, listening to some of the conversations <sup>in the kitchen</sup>,

how ever it had been possible to get Englishmen to fight foreigners in two world wars. <sup>Did</sup> But then, he thought, everybody in the world <sup>feel the same</sup> might feel the same about themselves?

~~Glennings, who'd travelled in Germany for F.I.M. for some years, said that none of his German friends could forgive themselves for being German.~~ And Granville <sup>He</sup> knew that in Mohammed there was a certain

distaste towards self in its Arab connection. <sup>Some of</sup> he and ~~one or two~~ of the clerks <sup>tended to</sup> glorified Granville in his Englishness <sup>y</sup> with political reservations.

And Hanni had dreamed about England all her childhood. <sup>A</sup> So it was possible for people to find Englishmen exciting in the same way? What was going to

happen to the world ~~when~~ if all sense of place, if the heart and soul of the birth-place was <sup>lost</sup> ~~going~~ to die in people, and a dream of 'abroad' substituted?

~~to valley the emptiness?~~ In that case no place would have a real heart after a time; you wouldn't be able to visit anywhere in the world

→ and say it was a place!  
 and be able to say genuinely that it had <sup>any</sup> anything characteristic about it, or any special intimacy, ~~that was~~ beyond you and yet of a distant, stirring fascination. There would only be abstract social relations in the end; there would only be agreeable manners and shared ~~general~~ general ideas, with the intimate heart burning and smarting inside, forlorn, never allowed full speech in case the required agreeable manners---the 'democracy'---were disturbed. That was the penalty of destroying the sense of place and country. It had all got confused in the nineteenth century, <sup>with its</sup> 'nationalism', and ~~so forth~~, an empty patriotism that was only the hard will driving for advantages; it had got confused with pride. It had got caught up with wars; the sense of <sup>a local</sup> being, passive and intimate, simply there like a tree, had gone.

n.p. Being English in Pinkie's sense, when she said it in a certain tone, <sup>she meant</sup> meant <sup>it meant</sup> 'pompous' or 'stiff', <sup>that is, in connection with power</sup> that is, in connection with power <sup>with the</sup> the hard-driving class that had once managed affairs. When she was intimate and gay she never thought of calling herself English: she apparently had no nationality then! But her laughter was English; her light eyes and her way of listening, her face quite open to anything that might be said, in deference, seeming unsure of herself; and her sureness underneath, that made her pout her lips and look 'patrician' as Dick said; and her fair skin, her long easy stride: these were ~~the~~ English! He could tell now what Mohammed and the clerks meant when they <sup>had</sup> called her 'the English flower'. And the independence of heart when everybody leaned forward in the kitchen arguing and shouting was English as well; why did they want to deny it? What deeper did we have in us <sup>but</sup> ~~and then~~ place, which meant country? We could do the silliest things, with apparently no meaning at all, but place endowed them with meaning! ~~in Basrah he and Pinkie had ordered hot-cross buns specially from a bakery on Good Friday, for two years running, and had eaten them hot with early morning tea, though they were hideous little objects, pellets of white dough that sat on the stomachs afterwards; but the smell of the cinnamon, and the taste of the currants, the dark cross over the bun,~~

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had an excitement from their childhoods for them that made the occasion the whole house---glow; what else was that but the excitement of place, baptised and endowed? What else was the nostalgia in him when he went into the countryside, the nostalgia for the past, but a sense of the heart having been lost somewhere? Pinkie and Dick and Ginger would all stick out a mile

as English people (anywhere abroad.) Then surely they had to stand by themselves, in their Englishness, at some point? That would be logical if they believed in Arabs doing so. ~~We were in equality with other people: wasn't that a marvellous discovery?~~

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But he couldn't explain this in any of the wild discussions that went on about Rubath. It remained the source of his discontentment and silence. ~~He could only say it to Pinkie when they were alone; and she nodded in a gratified way, because somehow in the 'England' war context.~~

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However, He ~~ask~~ ask Dick later, "Does England mean anything to you, really?" once

"How do you mean?" Dick looked at him closely, with flicer<sup>12</sup>ing eyes.

"In connection with Rubath and all that, do you mean?"

"In<sup>a</sup> way, yes."

Dick was abrupt, turning away from him. "I wouldn't live in any other country in the world, I can tell you that much. Listen---" He turned back to him with an unusual sternness. "It's you who're always off and about, isn't it? I tell you, I'd never be able to stick Basrah like you. <sup>Well, draw your own conclusions</sup> What do you want me to do, wear the Union Jack round my shirt-cuff?"

He felt contrite. ~~Why had he attached so much importance to talk?~~

Basrah

~~He'd fallen into his own trap? He'd said that this memory of place was silent and passive, a state of being, but he looked for it in people's talk just the same. It was just as strong in Dick as in him.~~ But still his argument persisted in silence. We'd got to connect it all up with our ideas again, this sense of our country. We couldn't go on picking away at the fabric without knowing what we were picking away at. ~~It~~ We'd got to avoid the power-talk of the past; we must'nt 'believe' in England, as if it was separate from us; we'd got to find out what it was, in <sup>side our veins.</sup> ~~in~~ We couldn't

Itals

just leave it to expand or wither away. We had to know. ~~We gave him~~  
 a new task in thought. <sup>We</sup> had to find out where our civilisation had come  
 from. We couldn't leave it to flow through us, hoping for the best.  
 And he didn't know where it came from any more than Dick <sup>did;</sup> ~~appeared to;~~ he  
 took it for granted in the same way; he ~~therefore~~ left it untended. ~~We~~  
~~got to know where we came from.~~ <sup>he repeated.</sup> Everything had become so confused. Per-  
 haps we had the task of 'undoing the nineteenth century' in us, now that it  
 had created, fixed and firm, the throbbing optimistic new world. We had  
 to look into it again, and recover our selves; see what we had lost;  
 we had to know <sup>what journeys</sup> why the journey had been undertaken and where <sup>they</sup> ~~it~~ had led us.

It was the first <sup>time</sup> he had had a thought of this kind for weeks. <sup>apart from his usual speech</sup> he was  
 surprised at himself. Life had become so topsy-turvy, his nerves <sup>were</sup> ~~hadn't~~  
~~been good enough for thought.~~ <sup>ideas</sup> He would have to go back to this thought,  
 when the time allowed: The This crisis was a respite from the <sup>usual nervous</sup> topsy-turvy life;  
 thinking was permissible---everybody was doing a little bit of it, and the  
 usual raw air of uncontained desires, <sup>in the house,</sup> the strange comings and goings, the  
 oblique look in Pinkie's eye, the hint of Grove in the background---'Grove',  
 'Grove', it was a special hollow, doomed sound for him---were abated for  
 a while.

h. p.

It focussed his interest and he even got down to writing the first  
 pages of his report. He outlined the idea of a new class having come into  
 being in the Middle East, without using the word 'class'. The more education  
 there was, <sup>he wrote,</sup> the better the standard of living for 'professional' people, and  
 the more chance there was of <sup>riots</sup> demonstrations. The students did most of the  
 shouting; they were the ones who in a short time would also be 'professional'  
 people; they demonstrated because they felt that their future <sup>life</sup> work offered  
 no place for their ideas. <sup>outside</sup> ~~outside~~ the four walls of the lawyer's office  
~~there was feudalism.~~ <sup>Now</sup> A trading company had to identify itself with them  
 in some way. It could start with <sup>by</sup> ~~better~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~treatment~~ <sup>our</sup> of its Arab employees <sup>better;</sup>  
~~than had been the case so far.~~ He then went on to compare Mohammed's salary

l. c.

with his own.

with that of an Englishman in <sup>the same</sup> comparable position ~~(himself)~~, for instance. He made a table, comparing the wages of clerks in England, taken from civil service statistics, and the wages of clerks working for the oil companies and TIM as an average. He thought it ~~was~~ quite clever. The table had a ~~good~~ professional look!

He also said that the Arabs would have ~~their nineteenth century~~. They had to go through <sup>their nineteenth century!</sup> this first. This would cut across religion; the Koran would no longer be read ~~as it had been in the old days~~. And it would cut across what might be called the 'divine privilege' ~~that had bound the villager to the old type of sheikh, however miserable his life. Any unconscious tie---the villager to the sheikh, the son to the father, everyone to the Prophet---would be undermined by professional people so that the 'conscious' society of the nineteenth century, shorn of 'divine privilege', might be constructed. This meant parliamentary bills or the equivalent, sewage, irrigation, town-planning, education and national health schemes, and so forth. Nothing could prevent it; and so a trading company might as well help it. The 'nineteenth century' meant an administered 'plan of life', that is, life stemming from conscious acts of mind, not from conditions that were passed on and inherited blindly, as little planned as family life. But he struck <sup>it</sup> all ~~that~~ out. It sounded ~~was~~ opportunistic. And it looked mystical after the tables of wages. Also who was he to be helping the 'nineteenth century'? To hell with it! He put the report aside.~~

16  
Chapter 16.

The crisis was like war being declared for a few days; everybody's thoughts were mobilised. The books he'd got out of the library were unread, and he no longer thought of going to a concert. He read the papers from cover to cover. 'Opinion' came in from all over the world, like a collective, headless creature. There was public opinion, military opinion, Arab opinion, official opinion, <sup>popular</sup> opinion (which wasn't quite public opinion), and informed opinion. It seemed to be a way of describing what a few people, or perhaps only one person, had said, without naming him; so that the style had an infallible ring as if an

all-seeing eye had written it, with

everywhere.

special access to all the thoughts people had. Since, partly because of the clamour of the press everywhere for immediate news, the real negotiating between the governments was going on in secret, by telegram and over the phone, there was little to report, and the language was becoming emptier and emptier, and the sound and style of all-seeing authority was becoming

n.p.

more and more shaky. [Glennings said that he'd heard from somebody high-up in the foreign office that America had given a warning to Moscow, secretly, that if they were seriously prepared to fight in the Middle East; if necessary, and thus any further developments in the crisis would be 'publicity-stuff', because Russia didn't want a war. The 'publicity-stuff' could take several forms. For instance, Moscow might demand that British troops be withdrawn from Rubath, if she got the notion that America was pressing for it as well; then it would look as if the presence of Russian troops on the Persian border had frightened Britain off, ~~if she~~ which would be valuable to the Russians as publicity among the gullible readers of newspapers all over the world.

9

[Glennings was now sceptical towards the press, after Creed's speech; he said it had opened his eyes, especially as none of the papers had really answered what Creed had said. Still, newspapers were the only source of information; they collected opinion from all over the world.] Glennings said that ~~it was~~ also possible that the British might hang on in Rubath to save their faces, and they might already have made an agreement with the Americans to this effect. The press, he said, had 'cooked their goose' since the war, through their headline mania; international politics was going to become more and more a matter of secret negotiation, and government statements everywhere

public relations

were would be more and more publicity hand-outs. Because of the press, he said, a government could do any wickedness if it got its public relations right. There was a rumour that America wouldn't support England in a show-

down. There had been a statement from Washington questioning the desirability of the sheikh of Rubath retaining Creed as his advisor; this was interpreted as a warning to England that she must 'go it alone'. Again Russia renewed her pressure; there was a second demonstration outside the

British Embassy in Moscow. There was a possibility of England being isolated! The papers <sup>sounded</sup> ~~were~~ alarmed. Suppose America and Russia came together with a mutual agreement on the Middle East? No, that was out of the question, one newspaper's 'informed opinion' said; but another newspaper's 'informed opinion' said the opposite. What 'public opinion' and 'popular opinion' thought now didn't matter; it was a question of survival! There was an increasing 'demand' for the withdrawal of British troops from Rubath. There were statements from politicians all over the world to that effect. There were <sup>sobri</sup> statements, indignant statements, <sup>wise</sup> and considered statements, and statesman-like <sup>political</sup> statements. Some <sup>made</sup> them to win an ~~election~~ election; some to keep their Oppositions quiet; some to court 'Arab opinion', or available opinion anywhere; and some because nearly everybody else was doing it. <sup>And</sup> Some were dragged into it at the last minute, by a 'public outcry' at their silence. <sup>to</sup> ~~during the crisis there were constant outcries~~ from all over the world. And one of the statements was made by <sup>known everywhere as the man of peace</sup> a leader in the east, ~~who had just reluctantly quelled a riot with fifty dead, over a dozen of them children, and three or four hundred wounded.~~

There was a second American statement questioning whether the sheikh wasn't in a sufficiently strong position not to need foreign help in his country; <sup>here</sup> ~~there~~ were two negatives, which made the sense ambiguous at first sight, but the papers interpreted it as another warning to England to get out of Rubath and suffer the loss of face as well. Glenning stuck to his line that it was publicity-stuff: America wanted to keep up its publicity as an anti-colonial power in case it got into <sup>colonial</sup> trouble of its own, ~~of a colonial nature,~~ for instance, in the Panama ~~canal~~ <sup>canal</sup>, ~~actually, he repeated, they'd wanted Russia to keep out of the Middle East.~~

Englishmen had to be careful where they walked in Arab cities, the papers said. There was no case of violence but one or two people had been surrounded and jeered at. He wondered, with a timid feeling, whether Mohammed would greet him as a friend again. Politics filled the air;

for the time being ~~every~~ English faces <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ abroad ~~was~~ vulnerable with politics! He was glad he hadn't gone, by the grace of God! He remembered seeing one of his own clerks in the riot outside the Mesopotamia hotel from which Mohammed had rescued him, and how this man who had taken tea with him only the morning before had scowled and stared into his ~~eyes~~ <sup>face</sup> as he passed with black, blind <sup>eyes</sup> swimming <sup>with</sup> ~~the~~ hatred, ~~that was~~ almost like desire; ~~it was~~ <sup>Grouille's</sup> ~~life~~ being possessed momentarily by another creature, in its claws, about to be eaten---there was a breath of horror and fear through <sup>his</sup> the body but at the same time a passive, paralysed fascination that made the body soft, in obedience to the bleak sightless <sup>ness</sup> in the preying beast's eyes. And the following day they again had tea together, and the man appeared not even to remember the incident. [ 'To hell with it!' <sup>he thought</sup> / He'd stay in his own country! ]

~~He wasn't going to be put on the rack and crucified as a new comer, without knowing what country he'd come into, for other people's actions, at another time.~~ He wasn't going to go out there to provide his clerks with another face to ~~work~~ <sup>No, no! He'd got a life of his own.</sup> work off their hatred on! / He found himself getting indignant even with Mohammed, and had to remind himself that Mohammed hadn't <sup>said</sup> a

<sup>on the subject.</sup> word [ It also rankled with him that he couldn't go to Dick with a clear argument which would give all the pros and cons of the matter. Where did he stand? Was he for or against British troops remaining in Rubath? Was he for or against the sheikh of Rubath? <sup>As a matter of fact</sup> Well, he was against, he supposed ~~from what he knew about it---from what he'd seen in the papers---from the historical nature of the situation, that is, the real shift of power, what history demanded.~~ But <sup>Well,</sup> Yes or no? / It couldn't be stated so simply! All right---as a concession, yes: against; if the press was interested one could have put it out to the press---yes; against! Very well, then, since you are against what about the British troops in Rubath? Now the British troops---! Yes or no? But it couldn't be treated so simply! So it went on, hammering all day. It showed how <sup>very</sup> little intimate life they had <sup>they</sup> at a breath from the governments of the world <sup>they</sup> changed. They were hollow.

n.p.  
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even  
ital

~~The plan outside was total and absolute. During these days there was nothing else~~

He <sup>said to</sup> ~~complained to~~ Dick <sup>that he hated</sup> ~~about~~ all <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ moral indignation?

"Don't you think moral indignation <sup>is</sup> justified," Dick asked him, "when people are shot without trial and that sort of thing?"

"Yes, but--!" The number of times he'd said yes-but in the last few days! "This reform movement isn't to get ~~any~~ rid of one set of people because they're wicked and put in another set because they're <sup>good!</sup> ~~not!~~" Dick was silent. "Why," <sup>Cranville</sup> he went on in a lighter voice, "do you think it is?"

"Yes!"

'Yes'; there it was. And all he could say was 'no!'

A friend of Pinkie's called Elizabeth Bewley-Patton ~~phoned~~ phoned her up and told her that she'd heard ~~that~~ this might turn into a 'big show'. Her husband was high-up in the Admiralty.

"It looks as if you won't ever be going back to Basrah," Pinkie said to him.

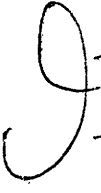
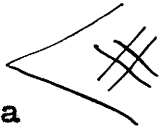
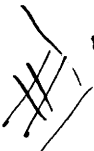
He noticed she said 'you' again. "Oh, I don't know," he replied.

"It'll probably blow over!"

In the middle of all this his parents came over. It was ~~quite~~ a relief. They were the first sane voices he'd heard ~~for~~ for days. Slowly as they sat there he was brought back to a sense of place, anchored again, with intimate thoughts. It was all distant for them <sup>, the crisis -</sup> ~~what~~ the world outside Abbott's Field had always been <sup>distant.</sup> He ~~thought of the back-room in Abbott's Field again with the thick brown cloth and the white doily in the middle where the bowl of flowers stood; the window would be open at the bottom and the gardens outside would lie in their silence, breathing, with the sound of a cat jumping to the top of a fence now and then, or the running of water from a pipe, or someone calling quietly, or a train passing in the distance as if high in the air, hurtling along on smooth steel. He brought his mind to bear on it deliberately, <sup>so as</sup> to become still again, to come down and~~

ital

l.c.



they

as parents

~~rest from the void of politics.~~ The moment ~~they~~ <sup>as parents</sup> came into the doorway down-  
 stairs he felt a new flush of life. He'd asked Pinkie to get off early  
 from the office, and she was upstairs getting the tea. Also Hanni, to his  
 surprise, said she ~~would~~ <sup>return</sup> come, and ~~go back~~ <sup>return</sup> to the office ~~for~~ <sup>in</sup> the evening.  
 He was touched by this: she had an unsatisfied desire for ~~intimate~~ <sup>own</sup> settings,  
 Pinkie said; life with Dick was like 'sitting in a dentist's waiting-room.'

~~His parents~~ <sup>They</sup> stood there smiling at him, the street behind them, and he  
 was aware at once that his usual life in the house was in a certain rhythm,  
 slow and halting, in a ~~dead~~ <sup>numbed</sup> silence, and that theirs was quick, with the throb  
 of life in it and a silence as well, but silence full of change and motion.  
 There was a sense of bustle, but of life, not of the heavy will or mind forcing  
 the pace; it was the exciting rustle of a dress before a party, not the <sup>important</sup> /  
 sound of ~~pretension or~~ <sup>and power;</sup> status; it was the rustle of intimate life, as in  
 childhood. For a moment he felt like a child as he stood there greeting  
 them, as if caught up in their arms again, his breath taken away.

"Hullo, son!"

He bent down to kiss his mother as she stepped into the dark hall, and  
 she murmured with a smile, <sup>her cheeks flushed,</sup> "Come on, about time we saw a bit of each other,  
 isn't it? What've you been up to all this time?"

He shook hands with his father, who said quietly, "Nice to see you again,  
 son." ~~They hadn't changed.~~ It was extraordinary to hear their voices  
 again. <sup>him,</sup> <sup>even</sup> There was a richness in ~~them~~ <sup>their voices,</sup> lulling and enchanting, that at once  
 embraced ~~the other person,~~ making room for all the tiny unspoken things in  
 a creature, the hidden follies and scrapes, and brought the world down to  
 glances and the warm flow between people, to the actual moment <sup>alive</sup> / between them.  
 How exciting ~~the thought of~~ <sup>it was to be</sup> having tea! ~~was~~ The kettle would make its special  
 little whistle when it boiled, and the electric fire would glow in the hearth,  
~~as it was~~ <sup>now</sup> ~~old day~~ and the carpet in the music-room, the deep armchairs  
 and the divan, the little coffee-table and the long curtains would suddenly  
 appear extraordinarily luxurious and comfortable, as he'd never seen them

n.p.

before! There was a glow inside things, just as there was in Abbott's Road. It wasn't that they made tea-time important by flurry; but ~~that~~ that any moment between people was <sup>the top importance</sup> important and <sup>exciting</sup> exciting. Usually when there was tea in the music-room it felt as if a time-limit had been set on the proceedings and that at any minute people would be up and off, back to the routine of life from which this <sup>had been</sup> ~~was~~ a brief, and by inference illusory departure. Or someone would be clever and amusing: that would give tea its meaning! Or someone important <sup>would</sup> ~~would~~ call and the <sup>tea</sup> occasion was <sup>given</sup> invested ~~with~~ a special, spurious social glow, that passed muster in the middle-class world for the glow of life! But it was never exciting in this way, for itself, without any reference beyond the actual moment to what people's status was outside, or to their cleverness of talk, or even to the talk whatever it was: the talk flowed from the moment, as <sup>the</sup> silences did, too; it was the glow of the moment itself that counted!

His father still had his keen and yet dreamy gaze. His mother was a little greyer, perhaps; that was all. She gazed at him for a moment with shrewd, dark eyes, and then they all started ~~upstairs~~ upstairs.

"Well, son, how are you keeping?" came his father's voice, with its keen, inquisitive edge, <sup>from</sup> behind him.

"OH, all right, thanks! Are you all right?"

"Not too bad!" his father cried. Then he added in a tone that meant a leg-pull, "Bit too much work in the house, that's all!"

"Go on, I like to hear you talk," his mother said, taking up the tone in an acknowledged, ritual manner. "Anybody'd think he was a poor, hard-done-by creature, wouldn't they, Philip?" Granville laughed. She puffed <sup>✓</sup> at the first landing and leaned on the bannister for a moment. "Blimey, you've got some stairs here, haven't <sup>✓</sup> you?"

<sup>ital</sup> "You're getting old, that's your trouble!" his father said, coming level with her. "Here, give us your arm!"

"Now wait a minute, don't go so fast---what's the matter?"

His father pulled at her arm jokingly, and winked at him. "Have to help the old lady sometimes!"

His mother had plump cheeks <sup>and</sup> a little line at the corner of her mouth as if from setting her chin in a determined way; her eyes were tired but her old, diving look was still there. Whisps of grey hair came over her brow. His father had put on his Sunday best, with a trilby hat over his eyes, and black, polished shoes.

"Pinkie at home?" came his father's voice again ~~from behind~~. This time there was the smallest hesitation in his tone.

"Oh, yes! She's upstairs getting the tea ready."

"That's right. We could just do <sup>with</sup> a cup of tea! How she's keeping, all right?"

"Oh, yes, she's fine!"

"Keep her in order, do you?" his father asked with the suggestion of a laugh.

"I try to!"

"That's right! They need it, son, you take it from me!"

"Oh, listen to that," his mother said, glancing at him as they struggled up the stairs, "quite the little tyrant, isn't he?"

"Well, who's the boss, then?" his father asked.

"I know who does the housework, that's all I know." She smiled at Granville. "Of course, they don't think that's real work!"

"Who does ~~the~~ the washing-up, then?"

"All right, all right, just because you do a bit of washing-up once in a while!"

"Once in a while? Cord---!" <sup>He gasped in an exaggerated way.</sup> ~~This was always the way he pronounced~~  
~~word~~ "I like that! Every dinner-time, you mean?" his father added, just as Pinkie came down to meet them, full of smiles.

She stretched her hand out to his father first. "Hullo, there!"

"Hullo, my duck, how are you?"

<sup>She</sup> Pinkie looked tall and robust, towering above them <sup>from the landing above</sup> ~~as they came up~~. His father grasped hold of her with a hearty movement, almost pulling her over, and gave her a smacking kiss on her lips. Her eyes lost their vagueness for a moment, blazing slightly ~~slightly~~ from the quick, overwhelming contact.

"How are you, my girl," his father repeated, gazing into her eyes, "all right?"

"Fine, thanks! Are you all right?"

"Oh, not so dusty! Getting old, you know, that's all!"

Then Pinkie kissed his mother and said, "Hullo, Mrs Granville, how are you?"

There was a quiet confidence between them.  
"All right, thanks, dear. You look well!" / "How do you like it out there?"

"Oh, it's lovely," Pinkie said in a mild voice. "Sun all the time!"

"From what Philip was saying there's <sup>a</sup> bit / too much of it at times, isn't there?"

"Well, it gets unbearable about this time of year. Last year it was <sup>g</sup> ghastly!"

"Was it, really? Still, you both look well / it, any <sup>low</sup> way!"

They walked into the music-room.

"Well, this hasn't changed," his father murmured, eyeing everything. "I expect you're glad to be back in a way, aren't you, Philip?"

"Oh, yes! It's nice to be back in these rooms again, I'd almost forgotten what they looked like!"

"That's right, you do, don't you, when you've been away all that time?"

"Yes!"

Pinkie told them about the report he'd been given to do, and the extra leave.

His father laughed, "Cord, I bet you're sorry, aren't you, son? Another month's leave?"

"Yes, it was quite a surprise!"

"Take it easy while you can," his father said. "That's my motto!"

And when they were seated he went on, "And what does the old country look like after two years?" He smiled across at Pinkie. "Not so dusty, eh?"

"Not too bad!" She <sup>smiled, too.</sup> ~~laughed.~~ "I could do with more of it!"

"Of course you could!"

"It's funny," his mother said, "you can have all the comforts in the world, can't you, but if it's not in your own country it's never the same, really, is it?"

<sup>It's</sup> "Hark at who's talking!" his father cried. "What do you know about it? You've never been abroad, have you?"

"No, but---" She glanced across to Pinkie. "It's obvious, isn't it? It's never going to be the same if it isn't your own country, is it?"

"Well, it isn't for me," Pinkie replied. "I don't think you really relax if you're abroad all the time."

"That's right." She turned to his father. "See, clever dick? You don't know everything!"

He laughed. "No, nor do you!"

His mother put her hand-bag down by the side of her chair, near her <sup>as she always did when on a visit.</sup> left foot, <sup>lying</sup> It looked so comfortable <sup>and</sup> sitting there: it <sup>was</sup> ~~had the look of an~~ exciting visit <sup>to him, from childhood association.</sup> ~~about it.~~ She bent down and opened the clasp, then felt inside for a tiny frilled handkerchief, <sup>she always carried</sup> with which <sup>and deftly</sup> she wiped her lips, <sup>with it</sup> He remembered <sup>she'd brought</sup> she ~~had~~ always carried a little bag of cachous <sup>at one time,</sup> in the shape of tiny hearts and stars, coloured bright red and yellow and blue, to suck ~~and~~ <sup>she was visiting then and she'd brought the little bag.</sup> ~~sweeten the breath on a visit.~~ <sup>They didn't seem to be used</sup> ~~any more.~~

"Well," she said, settling herself again after she'd put the ~~pinkie~~ handkerchief back, "we've been having some funny weather lately, haven't we? Sunny one minute and cloudy the next. Talk about August! It's more like December, ish't it?"

"Yes," Pinkie replied, "we started <sup>using</sup> ~~putting~~ these fires <sup>again</sup> ~~on~~ last wee k."

"So did we!" his father said, crooking one leg over the other, his head back. "I said to mum, ~~xxxxxxx~~ come on, I said, let's get that fire alight, it's chilly in here." He added with reminiscent surprise, "And it was, too."

"Then we didn't have any wood to start it," his mother murmured, looking at Pinkie again confidentially. "Well, you don't think of it in the middle of summer, do you? Still, we got it alight somehow, with some old scraps."

"Of course," his father said, "at one time we used to light it regular in the summer to get the water hot, didn't we?"

*n.p.* ~~A pause~~ [There was a pause.]

"What do you mean, at one time? Anybody'd think it was twenty years ago to hear you talk!" his mother cried.

Pinkie chuckled, hearing the familiar approach of an argument between them.

"Well, how long ago was it, then?" his father asked, a determined and yet baffled expression on his face.

"How long do you think it <sup>was</sup>?" she asked quietly in return.

"Oh, about five years, I should think," he replied, winking at Pinkie because he was really doubtful about this.

"Five years?" She shifted in her seat. "You must be crackers!"

*ital.* "Well, it's four. Young Philip was home, I know that!"

"What, when we had the heater put in?"

"Yes!"

"Don't talk rot, for Christ's sake!"

"Well, didn't he come down and say they'd put the wrong switch on or something---?"

"Philip?"

~~xxx~~ "Oh, no." He looked lame and added in a soft voice, "That was young Will, wasn't it?" This was Granville's eldest brother.

*ital.* His mother shook her head and chuckled, turning to Pinkie: "I don't

know---this man! I've never known anybody get his dates and years mixed up like him! Anyway," she added, looking across at him again, "he didn't say anything about the switch being wrong, he said they ought to put it outside the bathroom door instead of inside, so we could switch the water on without going in every time, and it's safer."

"Yes, well," his father said, going headlong into the argument again, "that's more than three years ago, I bet!"

"What?" She leaned forward, to deliver her thrust slowly. "That was last year, sippy date!"

"Last year? Will wasn't home last year!"

"What do you mean, Will wasn't home?"

"What I say!"

Pinkie was enjoying herself thoroughly.

"When was Will home, then?" his mother asked in her quiet tone again.

"Will?" He sounded as if the name hadn't been uttered before. He looked sheepish for a moment, pausing. Then he murmured, "Two years ago, wasn't it?"

"Two years! It was last year!"

"Don't talk rot!"

She shifted in her seat again, beyond her patience. "It was last year, I tell you!"

"Last year? I can remember that heater over the bath two Christmasses ago, anyway! What are you talking about, last year?"

"You can remember what?"

"That heater over the bath the Christmas before<sup>!</sup> last."

"Oh, you can, can you?" She winked at Pinkie. "Well, you're a marvellous man, because that heater wasn't ~~anywhere near the house two years~~ even manufactured two years ago. ~~In fact,~~ it only came out last year."

"What?"

"What?" She imitated his 'bark', as she always called it. "Just

think it out!"

There was a pause. And then, as always at the end of one of their arguments, his father said quietly, his eyes raised in puzzlement, "Oh, yes, that's right. Will got home on my birthday, didn't he? I was sixty-four, wasn't I?"

"And when was that?"

"Last year."

"The bell's rung at last!" she said with a laugh. "He always gets there in the end, even if you do have to drag him!"

Granville was always the official tea-maker of the house, and as he was going upstairs to <sup>do</sup> make it, Pinkie having prepared all the other things, his mother said in the tone of protective intimacy she <sup>always</sup> had used when he was a child, "Make it nice and strong, won't you, duck?" Hanni came later and helped, moving round the room <sup>with a plate of</sup> ~~helping everyone to~~ cakes, smiling and listening attentively to everything his parents said, but saying little herself. It seemed a nostalgic pleasure for her. She made extra sandwiches and cut the crust off so that they looked most professional, and she arranged them round the plate on a paper doily in a little design. Pinkie let her more or less take over.

Granville put two heaped teaspoonfuls of sugar in his own tea and his mother at once exclaimed, "Good God Almighty! The way you pile it in! You're drinking toffee, my dear!" She turned to Pinkie: "You ought to have seen what I used to spend on sugar when these boys were kids! Talked about sweet teeth!"

"Yes, we've never taken much of the stuff, <sup>ourselves</sup> have we?" his father said quietly. "Never more than half a teaspoon."

"No, it's funny. You'd think they'd take after you, wouldn't you?"

Pinkie nodded and murmured, "Yes", in her bored way, very slowly, her eyes gazing into the distance. It was becoming a strain for her. He <sup>only</sup> hoped she <sup>would</sup> last out: she could be so rude sometimes, getting up and going off to paint her lips or something, in her room. ~~Women were realistic in such~~ →

→ She always refused to make a false effort. And, indeed, this room where they were sitting was made for raw desires, and cleverness, and arguments on long summer evenings, and secret, <sup>dreams</sup> ~~thoughts~~ and bottles of wine on the coffee table, leaving the same round stain each time, and sombre ~~thoughts~~ <sup>thoughts</sup> that were too reflective for Abbott's Road. But the strain wasn't in Hanni. She sat there curled on the floor at the foot of the divan, perfectly at home, like a child.

His mother made a comfortable sigh after her first few sips ~~of tea~~ and said to him, "Mm, this is a lovely cup of tea, son."

"Yes," his father said, smacking his lips deliberately, "nice cup of tea!"

Pinkie told them that Hanni had been born not far from Basrah, but Hanni didn't enlarge on it and from there they went on to the crisis. The crisis! He'd forgotten <sup>it!</sup> its existence. And now <sup>that</sup> he heard it talked about ~~again~~ it seemed to have lost its sting. He couldn't see where it had any ~~relevance for him;~~

"It looks as if they want to damned-well start another war, doesn't it?" his mother said.

"What do you think, Philip?" his father asked. "Do you think there'll be any trouble?"

"No, I don't think so. These things usually blow over, don't they?"

"Well, I always say they make these damned crises to keep the people on their toes," his mother murmured. Then she asked in a higher, more open tone, "Doesn't that affect you going back, Philip?"

"I haven't heard anything yet," he said. "I shouldn't think so."

"Well, you don't want to go out there and get mixed up in one of those riots again, do you, Pinkie?"

"No!"

"I suppose it's the old story, isn't it?" his father said. "Keeping the people down, then wondering why there's trouble."

"That's right."

"They can't keep their wars as far as I'm concerned, anyway," his mother murmured.

"They certainly can! One's enough for me!" Pinkie cried, waking up.

"Well, we've been through two, and as far as I can see they didn't bring anybody any good, either of them."

"No, we don't want any more of that lark in a hurry," his father said. "Cord 'blige me," he added reminiscently, gazing at the floor, "those raids we used to get!"

"Go on," his mother cried <sup>with a laugh, changing her tone.</sup> "what do you know about it? You were asleep all the time!"

"Asleep?" his father asked with a smile. "I don't know what you mean, dear. You know the trouble I have sleeping!"

"Yes, that's right! The way he used to snore <sup>through</sup> ~~during~~ them raids," she went on to Pinkie. "I used to shake him---'Come on, wake up, there's something coming down on top of us!' I used to get scared out of my wits. Not him! He used to wake up all dopey and say, 'What's the matter? Why the hell don't you let me sleep?'"

"Well, a man needs his sleep, doesn't he, Pinkie?"

"Not like you sleep!" his mother cried. "Talk about snore!"

"That's right, she used to wake me up in the middle of the night when we <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ down the cellar and say, 'Stop snoring! I can't hear the bombs!'"

"Oh, I did use to get frightened! I used to listen to the whistles and think, 'I wonder if that one's for us!' And there was he snoring all the time!"

"Well, what's the use of worrying, that's what I say!"

"I used to say in the morning, 'That was a terrible raid last night,' and he'd say, 'What raid, I didn't hear anything!'"

They described how all the windows had been blown out, and they'd had  
 to kick through rubble all the way down the road to do the shopping, when  
 the flying rockets were coming over. He felt a pleasant drowsiness as their  
 voices went on quietly, so protective, as in childhood, taking over from each  
 other smoothly. The street outside, bare and bleak in the chill wind, was  
~~now~~ remote from them, and the low, dazzling-grey sky. His father's shoes  
 reminded him of the heavy boots that the men had once worn, carefully laced-  
 up and polished; The silence had always throbbed <sup>in those days,</sup> ~~then,~~ as it was doing <sup>at this point</sup> now.  
 All the sounds outside had <sup>had</sup> an intimate ~~sound~~ tone, as if they belonged to  
 the warm, enclosed room and weren't foreign and impartial as they usually  
 were. He imagined leaning over the table in Abbott's Road reading about the  
 crisis: ~~it would seem so remote over there,~~ the heavy, black headlines  
 would seem to describe an angry state of affairs over the roof-tops and far  
 away, like something in the sky; the sky was of such importance there---it  
 brought so much from the outside world; there were <sup>the</sup> storms, the flashes from  
 the trains passing in the distance, the voices over the radio reading the  
 news---the bombers that had come in the war, the searchlights, the flaming  
 aircraft that sometimes floated down in the night making a ~~strange~~ howling  
 sound that turned the sky into a kind of domed <sup>hall</sup> ~~room~~ where there was no  
 distance. Why hadn't he gone <sup>over</sup> ~~however~~ to Abbott's Road? He had <sup>for a visit?</sup> ~~had~~ a moment of  
 panic. He'd left it too late! There was only a month left. He ought to  
 be going down there more and more. Supposing his parents died, he'd never  
 be able to go there again; his roots would disappear; the tiny house would  
 go to someone else! He had the sense of trying to snatch at something,  
~~but it was vague what he was trying to snatch.~~ He was trying to snatch some-  
 thing across the division in his life. 'When will I get my life straight?'  
 he asked himself. There was this inertia that clouded his will, clouded  
 his heart! Where had he been since he left their world? They sat there  
~~unaware~~ unaware of any change in him, ~~it seemed~~ He ~~was~~ ~~answering~~ answered  
 their questions and nodded, feeling ponderous and slow compared with them;

how quick their world was!

Downstairs, when they were going, his mother turned to him and said, "What a nice girl that Hanni is, isn't she?" He nodded, and then they kissed good-bye. He'd be coming over to see them, in the next week, or perhaps the week after. And Pinkie? It depended on her job. She'd only just managed to get that afternoon off, <sup>he said;</sup> he invented this quite freely. But perhaps they'd <sup>both</sup> come over on a Saturday, when she was free. They ought <sup>all</sup> to go out somewhere, perhaps for the day. And they waved from the street.

"Good bye, son!"

*The usual rhythm was back again.*

Upstairs there was renewed movement. Pinkie was in the bathroom getting ready to go out, and Hanni was making herself some sandwiches to eat at the office later on that evening. They were calling out to each other between the two floors, talking about the man now nicknamed 'Joe Clockwork' whom Hanni had been out with the previous Saturday. He heard her say ~~that~~ with a spluttering laugh that <sup>'Clockwork'</sup> he had large ears, and Pinkie also laughed. <sup>They</sup> Everyone seemed in charge of themselves again; <sup>after the eerie interlude of his parents;</sup> there was more crackle <sup>in the house.</sup> He returned to it reluctantly, with fatigue.

~~His training had been so much for the other sort of life, its unguarded flow, without a map of routes and destinations it was wise or pleasant or useful to follow. Why had he taken the journey? If only he were blind in their way and not this way!~~

He thought of his parents arriving back home, perhaps at this moment. They <sup>would</sup> open the front door and bustle inside; probably his mother would say, "I'm dying for <sup>another</sup> a cup of tea, aren't you?" They <sup>would</sup> lay the cloth perhaps, take off their shoes and then open the little box by the fireplace where their slippers were kept. There would be a whist-drive later on, or a dance at Tatlin Broadway. Soon they'd be starting to get dressed, washing first, with a dim light in the scullery, then pulling out drawers and opening <sup>the</sup> wardrobe in the bedroom upstairs, the thought of a crowded and smoky hall before them...

Pinkie and Hanni were going out together. It was Tuesday, and so, he

thought, Pinkie should have no ambiguous appointments ahead of her. <sup>She</sup> She said she was meeting someone in the firm to 'check up on something', and she'd be back for dinner. [The evening paper only made a reference to Russian manoeuvres on the Persian border which <sup>had</sup> everyone expected in any case. The atmosphere of politics drifted back like a slow <sup>foul</sup> breath <sup>from</sup> ~~of air~~ along the street. Pinkie and Hanni left the house and everything was quiet. His parents' presence was still in the room. The sounds outside were sad---people's quick steps and a car brushing past. When it began to get dark he took a record from the pile on the floor, behind one of the armchairs. They were dusty and scratched, and some of them, including his precious Schubert impromptus, were <sup>broken</sup> ~~broken~~. He stared at the black, shiny fragments and was surprised to be feeling no shock or regret. What did it matter? They were dead objects without intimacy or touch. They fitted the ghost-life he was leading: men playing instruments, but unseen, at another time and place; borne to <sup>him</sup> ~~one~~ by ingenuity, voices coming from nowhere while the intimate heart lay still, receiving it, alone and at one remove, staring into space, inert like a bundle of nerves and guts that had been discarded in the movement of history!

He found 'Fidelio', and happily all the records were intact. He put on the beginning of the second act and from the moment of the first note everything changed. Music! He hadn't put on a real record since his return. <sup>began to</sup> It flooded through him and opened all his fibres and the channels of his being. Tears flooded to his eyes. The notes seemed never to have been made on the earth; ~~never to have been made.~~ And he seemed never in his life before to have heard pure sounds! There was also <sup>a</sup> perfect, solemn rightness in the notes as well, as if there couldn't be another arrangement <sup>for them</sup> and the order had been made before life started. He waited for the prisoner in the dungeon to begin his 'Welch dunkel hier!' And then it began, breaking out in the <sup>g</sup> ~~the~~ most marvellous and unbearably beseeching way from the other notes. He was in a state of collapse and ~~total~~ subservience, yet strong as well, the tears pouring down his cheeks in a ~~great~~ rush as <sup>if</sup> his face had nothing to do

with their activity; but at the same time, again, there was the order under-  
 neath, the total rightness, <sup>of it all.</sup> The music entered <sup>pain</sup> suffering with <sup>terrible</sup> firm-  
 ness and insight. He could feel the man leaning forward in the dark, as in  
 a performance he'd seen at the Graz opera house a few weeks after the war <sup>had</sup>  
 ended; when he <sup>had been</sup> travelled down to Austria, when everything ~~was~~ crushed and  
 burdened in war and distaste; and this same voice had climbed out of the  
 darkness with the same beseeching distress, crying for freedom! This freedom  
 was like a lover; <sup>in the song</sup> there was frightened, tender sensuous yearning for it,  
 for the touch of her dress, for a glance if that was all she could afford!  
 And Beethoven himself seemed to be leaning forward as well, through this man,  
 inside his voice, ~~almost~~ touching the listener with a calm hand on <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ knee,  
 in such intimacy, from the other side of life, comforting and yet always show-  
 ing you the darkness unflinchingly, so that even in the darkness of the prison  
 there was order! The music poured over him and through all his <sup>f</sup> fibres---  
 'What have I been doing all this time?' he thought! 'Where has my life been?'  
 For music always did this as well: it took the strands of <sup>your</sup> ~~his~~ silent life  
 and drew them together, seeing if they would go together, trying for the  
 harmony and putting <sup>you</sup> ~~him~~ on the path again. How could he have gone so long  
 without this purity? Even at the concerts he hadn't caught this moment:  
 it was always a moment---music was never a static thing lying before <sup>you,</sup> ~~one,~~  
 but a moment, <sup>never the same,</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>a</sup> conjunction, caught, gone! But this was where his life  
 belonged---to this purity! He meant to keep it! He refused to let it  
 go! If only he could keep it, the harmony he had in his hands now! Life  
 was so dry and full of ashes! He couldn't keep it. It died away... It  
 was only a moment. The end of the song came, when the prisoner imagined  
 being free and seeing Leonora again, crying 'Leonora! Leonora!' in a  
 mounting beseeching voice like a sexual cry; and all of a sudden Granville  
 had the sense that ~~the~~ music was the light, was in itself the flash across  
 the sky, not sound any longer but a being that had an endless existence  
 and could only be glimpsed! The record ended. A record! It was only

h.p. a record! The sounds outside came back. He was calm. He didn't trouble to dry the tears on his face but let them roll down into his mouth and dry slowly, making his skin smart. They were so dispassionate from him, like rain on his cheeks, that he had the impression that Beethoven had shed them for him, <sup>Beethoven had</sup> ~~on his behalf~~ <sup>his</sup> he'd taken on ~~Granville's~~ <sup>on his shoulders</sup> suffering, and shown where the order and strength <sup>in it</sup> lay, and the rightness. It didn't seem wrong to suffer. This made him calm. He felt in the thick of life; suffering was movement through it! It must have cost Beethoven such pain, he thought. This calm he had now was Beethoven's gift to him, as pure as <sup>the</sup> a gift from Christ! It was like coming to terms with his life in its wretchedness; there was an order here, he could feel the message of it and receive <sup>its</sup> certainty again. He didn't care if Pinkie came back early or not; but, as if in reply to his state of strength <sup>th</sup>, she <sup>did come</sup> came back, with oysters and wine, early, as a treat, she said! She talked about his parents, and how they always made her 'feel good.'

# The news next day was that there had been more rioting in Rubath, ~~and~~ this time close to the British garrison, and several people had been killed--- it was <sup>uncertain</sup> ~~ambiguous~~ whether by police-bullets or British ones. The British headquarters there denied that troops had taken part, but all Arab spokesmen scorned this. The papers talked about an 'outcry' from all over <sup>A</sup> Asia. ~~The eastern leader who was known as the 'man of peace' made another statement.~~ It looked as if England had fewer and fewer friends. There was a big set-to in the kitchen in the evening when everybody assembled. Glenning said he was sure British troops hadn't taken part, and Dick and the others were against him. One of the girls said there was to be a demonstration the following Sunday at Trafalgar Square and everybody ought to turn out. Volunteers were being asked ~~for~~ to carry banners, and she said there was to be a collection for an Arab refugee fund. Glenning laughed and said it was the first time he'd heard one of her crowd getting interested in politics. It turned out that the jazz-club she belonged <sup>to</sup> had a few people in the labour movement, among them ~~Kinger-Longer's~~ <sup>Ker</sup> boyfriend. He was getting all the girls

along. Pinkie asked Dick if he'd known that Linger-Longer had a boyfriend, and he replied with a genial glance across the table at her that he'd not only known it but <sup>he</sup> got a kick out of it. Hamni hadn't come in at this time, so he could <sup>talk</sup> be <sup>freely</sup> Glenning said that this crisis was breaking up harmonious families everywhere: men were walking out on their wives. Dick nodded and said with a perfectly straight face, <sup>almost as the office had</sup> that a woman he'd heard <sup>of</sup> had said to her husband, "I forgot to put a pinch of bicarbonate in the rhubarb," and he interpreted her as saying, "We've got to dig a trench and fight it out in Rubath," and <sup>had</sup> walked out on her at once! There was also <sup>the</sup> member of the royal family who'd asked <sup>her</sup> private secretary <sup>some</sup> ~~ceremony~~ ceremony would involve ~~what~~ <sup>what</sup> ~~held~~ <sup>held</sup> ~~being~~ <sup>being</sup> ~~all~~ <sup>all</sup> ~~day~~ <sup>day</sup> and was told, ~~xxxxxx~~ "Shaking hands all day and standing, m'm", which she heard as, "The sheikh intends to stay at Sandringham," and a suite was prepared at once!

Dick rattled <sup>all this</sup> ~~these~~ out without any hesitation. A preacher in Hyde Park, <sup>he added,</sup> ~~was~~ started saying, "I know intimately, and in my youth I was even seduced by, the shaken creed---" he was going to say 'of materialism', but the crowd hauled him down from the <sup>soap</sup> soap-box at once, having <sup>taken him to say</sup> ~~heard~~ ~~the~~ ~~shaken~~ ~~creed~~ ~~as~~ 'the sheikh and Creed.'

Dick was in a good mood and said that whenever he lifted a glass to his lips he always had a fellow feeling for Creed. He thought of him---probably 'an old sentimentalist'---festering in that palace and calling the sheikh 'darling' at breakfast. "Such a noisy call-to-prayer this morning, darling---does it really have to be so loud?" He'd heard that they both <sup>had</sup> had spy-holes called 'Les Voyeurs' in the walls of their bedrooms which <sup>gave</sup> gave a view of the main guest-room, where they put anybody 'choice'. Creed would say, "A choice article coming out from England this week---used to be at school with him---enough was <sup>never</sup> enough for that one---just up your street, eh, cheeky-sheek?" And the sheikh was probably 'a nice enough old boy.' However, Dick added, <sup>if</sup> <sup>hadn't been</sup> ~~is he was not~~ by principle' against capital ~~of~~ ~~support~~ punishment ~~of any~~ ~~kind~~ he would have <sup>had</sup> both the sheikh and Creed tried by an international court-of-law and executed if found guilty. This was an astonishing statement

coming so soon after his music-hall act,

I had

and Pinkie gave him one of her disbelieving guffaws. Dick talked coolly, without unpleasantness.

"I don't believe in executions," he murmured, "but these boys, pleasant as they might be, have incurred the wrath of mankind all right."

~~There was this ambivalence in what he said, indeed, in most of the talk that evening: the moral discrimination went on separately from the human. It didn't seem to be relevant to the moral issue what a man was in himself.~~

~~Linger-Longer, who'd formed an intimate hatred of the sheikh as if she'd known him many years, didn't object to Dick's jokes about him, or to his saying that he was probably a 'nice enough old boy.'~~

J

n.p.

~~She said she would certainly have them both 'sacked'.~~ [The headlines that morning had created a sensation,

everywhere. One paper had a single word in massive type, MASSACRE, and underneath in smaller letters, 'British troops involved?' An anglican minister was to broadcast, calling for the abdication of the sheikh. The evening papers said that a middle-aged man had <sup>chained</sup> chained himself to the railings outside the <sup>to the</sup> Rubath legation in Queen Anne's Gate.

Granville was silent most of the time. It was decided that everyone except Glenning, himself and Pinkie would go to the demonstration on Sunday. He said he might go as a spectator. <sup>(said he couldn't go because)</sup> Glenning said he had his reputation to watch; if that went his 'whole cardboard fabric of self' would go, and ~~that~~ would be the end of the 'best little P.R.O. in the City.' Pinkie murmured with a pout, "I wouldn't dream of risking being run down by a police-horse, on my one quiet day in the week!" ~~He would see the sympathy, and which might~~

~~even be called passion, in Linger-Longer's eyes as she talked about it, leaning forward, her face pale and long with light, joking, tom-boyish eyes that had a peculiar dignity in them as well; she was going to collect for the Arab refugee fund. She was never quite there--a bit of a wraith always; <sup>never quite with them on any evening</sup> ~~seemingly~~ about to go, <sup>it always looked</sup> on the edge of something else, but <sup>usually</sup> she ~~always~~ stayed <sup>the</sup>~~

~~latest, in the same chair.~~ <sup>Linger-Longer</sup> She seemed never to be quite sitting in her <sup>even when she was</sup> chair, or to be quite in the conversation, <sup>even when she was talking.</sup> But when she cried, "It's to be

ital  
ital

- referring to the 'massacre' -

absolutely bloody disgraceful!" she was definite for a moment, quickened with this <sup>passion</sup>, that made even her eyes pointed and dark. Usually her gaze floated over objects, never touching them, whereas Pinkie gazed <sup>rather steadily</sup> into the distance, <sup>Linger-Linger's</sup> her gaze was always moving. She glanced at Granville for support and he nodded. ~~But what was she feeling?~~ He looked across the room at where the morning paper lay and saw the word again, MASSACRE. But he felt nothing. What had she derived from this word? ~~Her passion came from it.~~ He only nodded when she spoke, saying nothing; and he kept up his silence all evening. ~~Glenning also was reticent. Otherwise there was great clamour.~~ But what did she feel? He found himself staring at her, trying to find out. And he kept consulting himself for <sup>his own</sup> feeling, but there was none. There was <sup>also</sup> a picture in the paper ~~that had been radio-d over from~~ <sup>Rubatt</sup> ~~Rubath~~ showing a scuffle in the streets; but it evoked nothing in him; it showed a bundle lying in the roadway, someone dead or wounded, and the rest was a blur of smoke from ~~the~~ tear-gas. ~~No pity came to him from this little square of black dots comprising a radio-photograph.~~ What did she feel, then? ~~And the others?~~ ~~Dick~~ Dick was quietly vehement, as if he could see the scene before him. Granville tried to imagine the scene and thus stimulate himself to feeling; but he couldn't! He felt inadequate, compared with the others. Perhaps the war had killed pity in him; this thought went through his head. It was in keeping with the 'orang-utang' image not to feel pity. He tapped himself continually, so to speak, for a change of emotion; but there was none. He was dead of <sup>feel</sup> feeling. He began to admire Linger-Longer compared with himself: here was a girl who came to the house several times a week and sat about like a piece of furniture, more or less discounted, apparently without a thought in her head, and <sup>now</sup> she was <sup>in</sup> making a far better show <sup>than</sup> in the matter of conscience. It made the world feel safer, that there were people who could be stirred to kindness by a few words <sup>in a newspaper</sup>; it meant that if there was trouble consciences like theirs <sup>would</sup> come alive and put a stop to it! She even seemed to gather beauty into her face with her passion; the light, vague

dignity in her eyes <sup>floated</sup> ~~came~~ to rest. Hanni came in and was clearly bored by it all, and got herself some supper, moving round behind the others <sup>nt</sup> silently, edging past their chairs; he took confidence from her presence; the headlines <sup>not</sup> ~~hadn't~~ <sup>not have</sup> appeared <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ changed her, either.

*Ital* Glenning said that even if British troops had taken part it didn't mean anything: it wasn't 'official policy'; troops, he said, were always 'young boys', a fact we always lost sight of, and of course they wanted to hit back when they were hit and sometimes the politicians couldn't <sup>i</sup> ~~hold~~ <sup>stop</sup> them. The others answered that the 'boys' oughtn't to be there at all; nobody was blaming them in any case; the official policy was wrong for having sent them there!

*Ital* Gerald was the only dissentient voice; from the beginning he'd been with the sheikh, or at least against Russian encroachments in the Middle East; he said it ought to be fought out now because it would have to be fought out anyway; the whole thing was a test of strength between our secret service and the Russian. ~~He meant by 'our' that of the western world.~~ But it transpired

he didn't mean secret service ~~sommach~~ as active political agents; he said it depended how much 'appeal' they had for people, what they promised them and so forth; and it was a question whether the Russians were promising them more, or whether <sup>the Arabs</sup> ~~they~~ were more at home with us. He wasn't scorned by the others so much as blandly disregarded. Linger-Longer laughed. Gerald had a

'classy' accent and she relegated everything he said <sup>to</sup> ~~into~~ the harmless region of history, where 'blimps', 'pukka <sup>sahibs</sup> ~~sahibs~~' and 'jingos' talked. ~~It wasn't even necessary to listen to him, and he didn't intend what he said seriously.~~ ~~It wasn't~~

*Ital* She laughed with genuine enjoyment, which made <sup>Gerald</sup> ~~him~~ blink and draw back ever so slightly, and she gave him good-natured glances as if he was providing

*l.c.* ~~another comic interlude like Dick's.~~ <sup>and</sup> The moment he finished speaking she talked about something else, in the manner of bringing the conversation back

~~to a serious theme.~~ The sheikh and Creed ~~meant for her what she felt they were, naturally enough; and since they were grotesque figures for her, with a possibly comic, but not/serious, existence,~~ <sup>creawably</sup> <sup>lives,</sup> <sup>and</sup> she heard Gerald ~~in the~~

→ as a voice in the same grotesque chorus.)

<sup>same</sup> ~~In the burlesque manner, as talking about something funny with a straight face.~~ When he said that the sheikh was responsible for 'one of the best programmes of social legislation in the Middle East' she ducked her head forward and spluttered with <sup>laughter</sup> genuine enjoyment, and ~~then~~ imitated his accent with a mock-solemn face---'seeowshaul lugisleeshun!'

Dick briskly quoted some figures <sup>about</sup> which ~~involved~~ the number of malaria cases actually treated in Rubath and the number estimated to exist---about a ninth of one percent' were treated--- and the earning power of the average peasant which was less in a week than that of a London clerk in an hour. Granville came in ~~in~~ briskly with the argument that in this case money wasn't used much in the villages of Rubath and the peasants out there didn't wear bowler hats to work and take the underground; ~~that~~ that the figures for Rubath were still probably better than those for most other Middle <sup>a</sup> Eastern states, including those with nationalist governments elected by 'the people' and all that. This started the old recurrent anger between them, a hot flame like a sudden intimate sign, recognised simultaneously.

"That doesn't justify it!" Dick cried.

"But why don't you talk about all the other states as well?"

"I do!"

"What, all the time?"

"I'm talking about a state of affairs! That's the state I'm talking about!"

"Anyway---" Granville's anger made him flush. "What exactly are you getting so het-up about? What's all the emotion for?"

<sup>He</sup> Dick's mouth opened with surprise. It was certainly an odd question coming from Granville: unprecedented, in fact! <sup>He had</sup> Dick ~~had~~ once said that ~~he~~ <sup>Granville</sup> obviously liked to think of himself as a wholesaler in feelings, while everybody else in the world was a retailer or small entrepreneur. And here was the 'orang-utang' sitting there as cool as you like asking what the 'emotion' was for.

"Do you really mean to say," Dick asked him, "that you don't know what we're getting het-up about?"

Dick's gaze made him feel ashamed, and he faltered. "Well, I don't, really. I'm not saying you're wrong. I'm asking. What is it, exactly?"

There was a pause during which everyone at the table was still.

"Well," said Dick, "it's because people have been killed."

"But people are always being killed."

"Yes, but this has come to our notice. It represents one set of human beings being cruel to another set, in the most cynical way. It's the most frightfully cynical cruelty. Don't you think that's something to get het-up about?"

He was flushed and pouting again. "No!"

"No?" Their voices were quiet; they nearly all joined in with Dick.

"No?" And Dick put up his hand in a helpless, resigned gesture, letting it fall again limply, leaving it to the others to form their judgements.

"Don't you, really?" ~~Dick asked him.~~ Granville noticed in his eyes, too, a gleaming compassion, soft and yet direct, light-blue; and again he was aware of shame. But he was fixed into an attitude now and he wouldn't budge, in much the same way as Dick had been in the Hamlet discussion, provoking hostility with deliberate, self-hurtful defiance.

"Oh, well, Pip, if I didn't know you I'd say you were pretty far gone. But I do know you and I know what you've just said isn't true!"

Granville was pleased and flattered but in the interests of pride kept the pout and frown on his face; they would have to stay there for the time being, ~~anyway~~, until he could make a decent withdrawal.

The discussion passed away from him and he was left to his own thoughts. He was disposed to believe that this state of compassion in Dick was the equivalent of his <sup>own</sup> 'orang-utang' condition: how much worthier it was then, to have this mercy in one instead of the <sup>blind</sup> rush of feeling he was acquainted with in himself! He looked at Dick again. There it was, ~~again~~, a genuine

pity like a light in his face! And confronted by this Granville had the same kind of recoil Dick had had in the Hamlet discussion when confronted by <sup>Pinkie's</sup> ~~his~~ passion. Which of their passions would lead to a more ordered world? which would lead to the greater quietness? He was inclined to say Dick's. There was a steady line in it; there was no <sup>d</sup>anger of anyone getting hurt!

~~But what was the difference between their passions? At first he wanted to say that there wasn't any, in form anyway; they both felt strongly about something, that was all. But still he was sure that their feelings had come about in different ways; a difference might lie there. His own passion had started during the performance of Hamlet, and Dick's had started from reading a newspaper. Dick's actual life hadn't changed; he hadn't been moved to pity by anything happening before his eyes. There had only been the words of a newspaper, whereas in his own case, at the performance of Hamlet, there had been people. But he wasn't satisfied with this. Surely the newspaper was for Dick the same as the performance was for him, simply a platform for the imagination? At Hamlet Granville had begun to intertwine the themes of his own life with those of the play, and by means of the newspaper Dick had arrived at the theme of violence. The passion was the same; Dick's concern wasn't any less than his.~~

But there was a snag here. Every day there were reports of violence in the paper. Why didn't Dick feel pity every day? He couldn't possibly do so! Didn't that <sup>make it</sup> point to the spurious nature of his pity? His pity was a poor mental thing! ~~But it wasn't spurious; this could be seen from his eyes. Where was its essential feature, then? Where did it differ from the pity he might feel? He <sup>believed</sup> realised that Dick was feeling pity not for the death and wounding of people whoever they were, as people, but for them as certain people; <sup>thus, Dick</sup> ~~For this reason~~ he didn't expend his pity every day, on all the riots, frontier-skirmishes and, sometimes, revolutions that happened everywhere. The Russians had suppressed riots, after all; as a matter of fact they'd done so <sup>during the time he and Dick had been in</sup> ~~during their time in the training-school days, when he and~~~~

<sup>ital</sup> His mind didn't seek to order or transmute in any way afterwards, in Dick it had the effect of bringing the mind into instant surveying and re-organising activity, by long discipline. He thought that in Dick this mind-activity protected him against the ravages of feeling; but this didn't make the feeling any less; the mind only came in and did its immediate work, which was perhaps unknown to Dick himself, being so automatic; the mind pulled him back from the hot areas of feeling so that the event outside him, say an accident, at once became a dead, physical scene in detachment from him; the feelings were still there, a hot mass, but the mind contained them and pulled them back from the scene, so that a special mental relation was set up in which there were his feelings 'inside' and the world where the accident was taking place 'outside', with the mind refusing to be alarmed. <sup>But how could that be?</sup>

<sup>ital</sup> ~~And~~ how, during a quarrel with Hanni, Dick ~~had~~ trembled in <sup>exactly</sup> precisely the same way as he ~~sometimes~~ <sup>himself</sup> did with Pinkie; it <sup>had given</sup> gave him a wonderfully sweet sense of equality in the flesh! <sup>very</sup> He realised <sup>why</sup> now how much he'd always taken for granted that Dick's feelings were weaker than his.

<sup>ital</sup> Dick was right, perhaps: he did see himself as a wholesaler in feelings, with Dick a mild entrepreneur? <sup>them?</sup> But how could there be such a gulf between people? There were slow people and quick people, as there were fat and thin. ~~But there were...~~

<sup>ital</sup> ~~equality in the inheritance of the flesh~~ But they were of one flesh! They were the same in their kidneys, their hearts and limbs: how ~~was it~~ possible that ~~they~~ <sup>they</sup> could be foreigners to each other in their feelings?

<sup>ital</sup> Especially two people like him and Dick, from the same country, the same city? It was the same with 'intelligence', the word that had been ringing in his ears since the Sussex days, one of the cardinal middle-class virtues.

<sup>ital</sup> Who did he know <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ wasn't intelligent? <sup>of those</sup> Who sitting round the table, could he say was 'unintelligent'? Not one of them! They were all quick people; they understood everything that was put to them. Gerald and Glenning were 'honours men' from Oxford. Who did he know in the world who wasn't intelligent? He couldn't think of one for the moment; not even from the past!

Everyone in Sussex had been intelligent, including the Major's wife. Walsh had been intelligent; ~~what he'd lacked from Granville's point of view~~ <sup>had been</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>rightness of perception more than mental powers.</sup> Intelligence was a universal quality of the middle-class, it seemed; he ~~wouldn't think of~~ <sup>couldn't think of</sup> one person, now or in the past, who lacked it! People like Abu Kath'm were intelligent in another way; one might call it intelligence of the heart; a little bit of education and they'd be <sup>the same as</sup> among the others! Where did people differ, then? Where did he differ from Dick? ~~He was inclined to say now, 'If the wills~~ ~~The wills are different. We want to achieve different things.'~~ ~~The will~~ ~~Dick had been filled with in childhood was different from his; it was a will of the mind, whereas Granville's was one of the body, the nerves, somewhere in his middle, not, least of all, above in the brain. But Dick had an equal~~ ~~passion, and equal powers in everything. There was only this difference of the will, where they were both free; perhaps he would find out one day that Dick's freedom had been taken from him, producing a dislocated and automatic will, whereas his own had remained the free and organic energy which the mind was powerless to contain.~~ ~~One could see a passion of steely mental obstinacy in Dick, as when he'd punished Hanni systematically for violating one of his evenings-out: he'd calculated that three evenings of loneliness for her at Hampton Court would effect the right degree of contrition, and so he'd stayed away for three evenings! This was the will he'd been taught, it worked through the mind; but for Granville this behaviour would have been impossible; he would have had a sense of ~~totally~~ <sup>his kind of will</sup> betraying his ~~own~~ <sup>was</sup> past and his whole breathing organism, in deliberate self-mutilation; his will would have worked in a different way, towards trying to persuade Hanni by words until she was filled with his conviction like a breath in her!~~ He remembered a strange incident at training-school when Dick had come almost running to him on a Saturday morning and said, "By God, you know, that Hanni is a marvellous girl! Do you know what she said to me this morning when we were in bed together? She said, 'If you ever did something I really hated I'd be capable

of ~~going away~~ and putting you out of my mind and never thinking of you again as long as I lived!" And Dick had added, "Don't you think that's terrific?" As on many other occasions Granville simply gaped at him. It didn't sound like Hanni at all, even from the little he knew of her. In those days, when she and Dick were getting to know each other, she hardly opened her mouth and sat rigid in her chair like a frightened child all the time, her eyes wide with panic. She was so clearly trying to show herself worthy of Dick's world, where such merciless statements were admired! <sup>He</sup> asked Dick what he liked in what she'd said, and he replied that it was proof of her character for him, a ~~unmasculine sort of character you wouldn't expect.~~ Hanni did have a steely will, of a kind. But it wasn't in her softness to say this. How could Dick take her as sincere? <sup>believe such a thing true,</sup> How could he have done so with anyone, not only her? There was such an odd artificiality of judgement in ~~him~~ <sup>Dick</sup> sometimes; as if the mind had to work alone, unsupported by the sound testimony of the heart. That incident was a good example: it showed Dick's will at work, producing a mental world which Hanni was frightened into joining. ~~Perhaps, in those early days, she thought that this was the way one behaved in England in affairs of the heart.~~

<sup>n.p.</sup> Did Dick's will consist of a series of clear mental decisions? [Pinkie said that Dick's work was steadily changing his character and that he went to the office every morning saying to himself, "I shall give this client five minutes, the other twenty," and, <sup>that</sup> except for the Brazilian client who took his shoes off to rest his feet and <sup>then</sup> took Dick quietly through his album of nude photographs, <sup>he</sup> conformed to it. Granville was the opposite. He was at once ~~totally~~ disarmed by another person's presence, as much as he tried to cultivate Dick's orderliness; he <sup>sometimes</sup> often found himself saddled with a client in the Basrah office for two hours or more, with a cigarette to <sup>to</sup> follow at the end of the day and endless drinks <sup>to</sup> brotherhood. Other people <sup>were</sup> represented an ~~irresistible~~ drug enveloping the powers of his mind, removing from him all motives except that of being as agreeable as possible for as long as the

~~person wished; and having a silent policy towards this person would have seemed the utmost discourtesy; it was a rule which he'd been brought up on in Abbott's Road, and he was surprised to find that it wasn't a cardinal rule of middle-class courtesy as well. ~~In Dick the mind had a pervasive activity;~~~~

And ~~Granville~~ <sup>was</sup> surprised at ~~the Reading~~ <sup>the</sup> training-school to see how well ~~he~~ <sup>Dick</sup> Dick ordered every day, with a little reading, a visit to town, a letter to Hanni, a drink and a brief chat in the bar, then bed, to fall asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow. There was a marvellous intactness <sup>in Dick</sup> ~~there~~ <sup>that</sup> Granville envied, and now he was inclined to say that this intactness, which gave the impression of harmony, was due to the constant surveying and ordering activity of the mind. <sup>Dick</sup> Granville <sup>had</sup> (on the other hand) <sup>had</sup> floated through the day as if time was a kind of raft and he ship-wrecked on it; he tried to imitate Dick but it lasted half a day at most, after which his mind relapsed into its humming state, as <sup>little</sup> personal as the wind through the trees. Dick seemed to be in such good control of the flow of time, and <sup>smile to</sup> Granville was ashamed of himself for letting life roll by so inconsequentially. It was also in the way Dick played darts in the bar sometimes: he watched the dart-board with cool, delicately glittering eyes for a moment, and then his pale hand came slowly forward, curving slightly over the level of his head, and sent the dart in a ~~soft~~ <sup>soft</sup> but also ~~hard and~~ direct flight to the board. To darts and chess he brought a clean, methodical, softly devout concentration. He would sit over his chess-board with his elbows on his knees and his head bowed, quite still, and now and then he would rub his chin with the tips of his fingers, moving them softly through <sup>the</sup> his light hairs of his beard, without moving his eyes at all, in a deep, interior concentration which, it seemed, no one could disturb. One of Granville's first memories of <sup>him</sup> Dick was in the library of the training-school sitting by the fire, writing a letter. Granville had just come in from a long walk, it being the week-end, and was still in his overcoat, his cheeks red and smarting from the wind outside. There was no one else in the room and he was just about to talk when the silence,

seeming to emanate from Dick as he sat there with his legs crossed and his head bowed, drew him in and stopped his words. It also made him feel sheepish and redundant. Dick looked up very slowly, ~~and~~ without surprise, and said in a light murmur, "Oh, hullo, bo'sun," and then went on writing at once.

Granville had <sup>had</sup> a sense of Dick's body as more than usually aware of itself, in contentment and self-relish, ~~And he felt it often~~ he was to have this sense again many times as he got to know Dick better; it was a remarkable gift of harmony, he thought, which hardly tallied with the rest of <sup>Dick's</sup> ~~his~~ nature.

His eyes were steady, inclined with a genial expression on to the paper before him, and his lips were closed easily together, while he wrote without pause in a clear, effortless, scholarly <sup>'s</sup> hand, quite unaffected by Granville's arrival. <sup>Dick</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~they~~ made a full stop on the page and paused, looking up, and there <sup>had</sup> ~~seemed~~ a chance of speech;

l.c.

But after a few seconds he looked down again and began writing in the same way as before, in perfectly straight lines, again without pausing; and for Granville, <sup>seemed to be exactly what Dick</sup> ~~at that moment, sitting by a fire and writing~~ letters <sup>was</sup> ~~seemed~~ the most desirable thing on earth ~~to be~~ doing.

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But at the same time Dick's harmony wasn't an inclusive thing; it didn't ~~affix~~ infect <sup>Granville</sup> Granville with harmony as well, by a flow of spirit across the room; on the contrary, it made him feel redundant and useless, and also upon his dignity, since once having entered the room he had to make a show of <sup>having</sup> ~~coming~~ in for a purpose, whereas his purpose had been to talk to Dick.

He was inclined to believe now that this was a superb mental harmony in Dick, and perhaps a state into which <sup>Dick</sup> ~~he~~ could induce himself ~~more or less~~ at will; but it wasn't a total harmony of self which infected other people by its presence; it wasn't the harmony of a comfortable ~~and~~ ~~man~~ ~~and~~ ~~man~~.

As always it stirred Granville to admiration as <sup>a</sup> new kind of consciousness ~~in~~ which made <sup>anything</sup> ~~him~~ feel <sup>clean and</sup> ~~remarkably~~ safe, at least for the moment, because it refused to fall the victim of hidden feelings, and seemed to be making life as it went along. <sup>Have,</sup> ~~perhaps,~~ ~~was that difference he was looking for in their wills: Dick's was~~

~~bent on making himself <sup>500</sup> the author of life; Granville's on deciphering what~~

he found. This was the difference between their days: Granville was always in a state of wondering what the day would unfold next, while Dick took his in hand and laid it out carefully, with a classical deference which made Granville feel untidy and awkward. → Clear, sunny days always seemed specially so in Dick's presence; they suited his coolness; he was a visitor on the earth, choosing all the sights and sounds, strolling in the golden air; everything he touched, a book or a clean handkerchief, had this deft, vivid appearance as if it wasn't joined to reality but separated by his consciousness into an object called on to the earth by <sup>his own</sup> will.

When Granville said 'I think' he was stating his position as a whole person, usually. Dick, on the other hand, gave the impression when he said this of a reflecting mind at work, in total separation even from himself. ~~withdrawing when he said this, and speaking the conclusions of his reflecting mind~~ He seemed to be selecting his thoughts from an array, while Granville was <sup>rather</sup> the mere agent of articulation for his ~~own~~ <sup>thoughts</sup>.

This was clear in Dick's attitude to Creed. In his natural capacities he liked him; but rational principles made Creed his enemy and he was prepared to punish him in total detachment. →

Such an ambivalence would have been impossible in Granville. This ~~was~~ difference was perhaps due to their upbringing. In Granville's life ideas were the means by which he <sup>had</sup> altered himself and produced a new life for him ~~self by going~~ away from Abbott's Road; without them he would have ~~gone into~~ <sup>entered</sup> his father's dockyard and his world would have been quite foreign to his ~~his father's dockyard~~ present one; ~~and~~ what he was living now was the product of his ideas. But Dick would have lived in the same kind of house and met the same kind of people whatever his ideas: there was no further place to go to beyond the middle-class <sup>after all!</sup> Thus, Dick's ideas weren't essential to him from the earliest age as the moving power of his <sup>s</sup> life, the cogs and levers of his progress; in Granville they were, and when, for instance, he got to Sussex at the beginning of the war <sup>the experience</sup> that was at once a fresh source of thought for him--- in the comparison between the countryside and his former life---and the results of this thought, moving slowly in him like a germ, in silence, changed his

Ideas weren't the moving power of Dick's life, the cogs and levers of his progress. In Granville they were: thought moved slowly through him like a germ, in silence, changed his life---this had happened in Sussex and it had just happened in Basrah---there were continual revolutions in his life that came from thought. In Basrah germs of thought had started unawares, without him inviting them or trying to provoke them, and they continued naturally where his thoughts in Sussex had left off, →

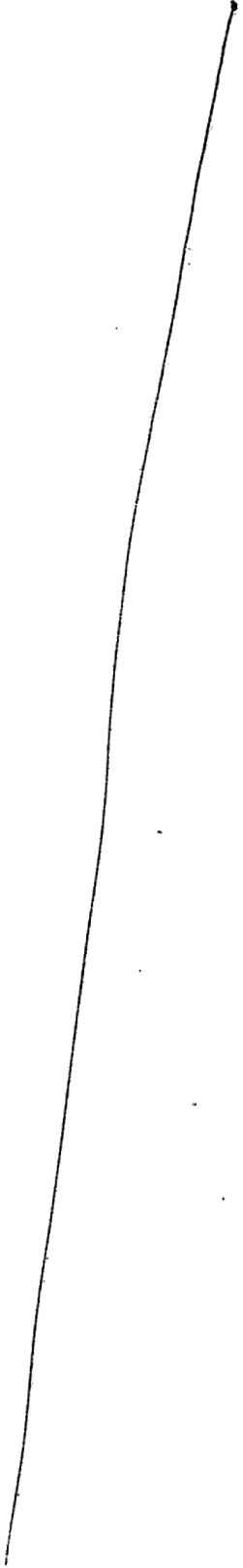
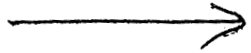
~~walks, in turn changed his life afterwards so that all the way through the war~~  
 he kept before himself <sup>an image</sup> a meaning in his life, ~~an image~~, and took his job in  
~~T.I.M. and applied for the Middle East in the light of it; and then in the~~  
~~Middle East similar germs of thought had started unawares and silently, with-~~  
~~out him inviting them or doing anything not provokes them, and naturally they~~  
~~continued where his other thoughts in Sussex had left off, as if there~~  
 already <sup>lay</sup> in him an order, ~~which he was obeying without knowing it~~ and the  
 climax of this had been the night of the eclipse, which in turn <sup>had</sup> changed his  
 life so that now he enjoyed a greater stillness ~~of being~~ than before and  
 lived with fewer divisions of will; not that his life was more still in the  
 outward aspect, nor even that he could remember the details of his thought  
 that night, but he was content to leave it like this until his next point of  
 clarity came, confident that his life was moving and changing silently all  
 the time in the light of that thought, through the chaos <sup>all the</sup> and bitter, jagged  
 contradictions every day; he thought the night of the eclipse would bear  
 fruit in him as action and living later on, and was moving in him like a  
 germ now, being absorbed slowly, turned over and transmuted through <sup>all the</sup> every  
 actions <sup>(with each other.)</sup> that seemed to him to have no connection. But Dick's ideas, ~~as~~  
~~thoughts~~, didn't have this life-giving and life-absorbing quality. They were  
~~born~~ <sup>leisurely</sup> ~~and about them~~ They fitted the <sup>quiet</sup> ~~quiet~~ hours after din-  
 ner, when there was time for <sup>cleverness;</sup> reflection; or they were penetrating and  
 dissecting little thoughts about the ambiguities of life, sex, fears,  
 pleasures. They came from sitting back a little from life. They weren't  
 thrown up haphazardly in the course of action, from underneath; they came  
 from a quiet act of surveyance. There was a suggestion that conditions  
<sup>high</sup> had to be safe and reasonably easy for them to be possible. They ~~therefore~~  
 seemed separate from the real world that flowed along outside, its tumbling  
 events too hot for reflection. They weren't <sup>couldn't be</sup> likely to be had by <sup>someone</sup> anyone in  
 distress, or suffering in any way. ~~Also~~ <sup>Also</sup> they won scholarships, impressed  
 teachers at school, ~~and~~ belonged to ~~some extent~~ to formal <sup>and</sup> stylish <sup>e</sup> behav-  
 iour ~~and to performing before a circle of close friends.~~ They were phil-

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-osphical in the weak, mental sense---'theorising' <sup>deliberate act of the brain.</sup> And they produced, if successful, an answer that was like a plan, fitting the facts.



and was social differences, with Dick on the other. Dick represented a distortion of consciousness unequalled in any other social class, or in any other epoch of history. He'd been brought up to take a certain kind of will for granted as the normal human will, when actually this was unprecedented in history, and unknown both to working people, among whom Granville had lived, and unknown to the former aristocracy, in whose shadow Pinkie had lived. That was the difference of upbringing. The middle-class was a unique and new consciousness.

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Granville ~~had been~~ found that compared with Dick he couldn't properly form judgements about other people. This didn't mean that he was less given to moral judgement of other people's actions than Dick; if anything, he was more. But he could <sup>only</sup> see the actions: he couldn't make a formal judgement of another person's character in a satisfactory way. If Dick asked him what he thought about someone, say someone they'd ~~just~~ met at the office, ~~and he would say, in the same way, as he could not do his own life in the form of~~ ~~or someone~~ who'd dropped in at the house, he stumbled and said, "Oh, I don't know." He---" And there he would stop. Or he would say perfunctorily, "Oh, he seems all right", when in fact he didn't feel happy about the person at all; only the fact was n't clear to him." But Dick would give a succinct appraisal of the man, which always appeared to Granville exactly right, so that he wondered at Dick's powers of penetration, and his imperviousness to false charms. Granville would ask himself why he hadn't been brave enough to venture such a clear criticism, to say exactly what he thought of the man; and he resolved to do so next time when the occasion arose. But when the next occasion <sup>did</sup> arose the ~~very~~ same thing happened; he hesitated ~~in a~~ ~~moment~~ and murmured something like, "Oh, he's a nice enough person." Sometimes he would say, "He gives me annasty feeling." But he couldn't give a real appraisal. All he could say was what the other person made him feel like; he couldn't venture to say what the other person was. He always wanted to say to Dick, "Well, I don't know, he probably has reasons for everything he does." People ~~had~~ only had themselves, after all; they had to get on

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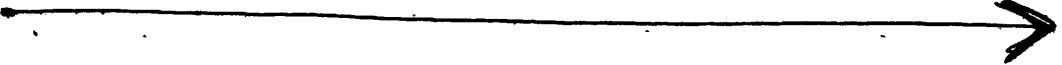
with what they'd got. On the other hand, Dick was much less damning than he was. <sup>He</sup> Dick gave a judicious description, Granville went by the state the other person ~~was~~ put him into, and if this was an unharmonious state he blin-  
 ed off and didn't want the other person mentioned again. When he ~~was~~ <sup>When</sup> ~~asked~~ <sup>asked</sup> ~~What~~ <sup>What</sup> ~~attempted~~ <sup>attempted</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~make~~ <sup>make</sup> a complete judgement he went into a long, ~~speech~~ <sup>speech</sup> wandering ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> ~~attempt~~ <sup>attempt</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~think~~ <sup>think</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~him~~ <sup>him</sup> ~~or~~ <sup>or</sup> ~~Granville~~ <sup>Granville</sup> ~~either~~ <sup>either</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~go~~ <sup>go</sup> ~~into~~ <sup>into</sup> ~~a~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~long~~ <sup>long</sup> ~~speech~~ <sup>speech</sup> ~~trying~~ <sup>trying</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~examine~~ <sup>examine</sup> every aspect of the other person until he ~~reached~~ <sup>reached</sup> a few ~~general~~ <sup>general</sup> ideas, and his impression was that Dick reached these ideas at once, by his habit of mental ~~surveillance~~ <sup>surveillance</sup> Granville was swept away in the hot currents of another person's presence, while Dick kept his judgement alive. Granville was aware of a state of feeling in himself to which no words could do justice; and when asked what he thought of someone he understood the question to be, 'What is this state of feeling in you?' Of course, he hesitated and stumbled, trying to order his feelings for articulation; he felt a ~~fragment~~ <sup>fragment</sup> weight on him, a state close to panic, and he would think to himself, 'What shall I say? Quickly! But I must do justice to the other person; I must make a true statement of the feelings he evoked in me---! But by that time the occasion was gone; he'd only been asked, after all, for a simple little statement, such as, 'Oh, he's a snob', or 'He looks dishonest,!' This was what he couldn't do.' He stood before other people in something like a dazed and hot state---not an abnormal state at all, but one which made cool mental activity impossible; especially if the other person was new to him. ~~When he stood before another person there~~ <sup>When he stood before another person there</sup> ~~was a buzz~~ <sup>was a buzz</sup> of life in him different from other times. This meant that he had no repartee, except with someone very intimate to him, and that he had no power <sup>quiet, conversational</sup> of/unpleasantness, direct or oblique: he couldn't cut or snub. If the person he was talking to was disagreeable he had no defense; he had to wait ~~until the situation changed itself.~~ <sup>until the situation changed itself.</sup> Dick was much better-armed against people. He went away from offensive people uncontaminated. Al so he could give other people better attention than Granville because he was less dependent on his immediate feelings towards them, and so could elicit their best

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side in a deliberate manner; he could see himself apart from them.

Hranville was aware that, to accomodate himself to the middle class world, he would have to learn---or he would learn by daily example---how to do what Dick was doing, more and more. It meant changing from the Abbott's Road state, which was unfitting for the world he found himself in now. into what might be called a 'picture-perceiving' state. One had to have a picture of other people. In the Abbott's Road world you sat side-by-side with other people, so to speak, looking not at them but at a spectacle in front of you---he found he got on best with other people when they were doing something together, when there was something to watch, like a theatre: you were aware of the other person, but not in a mental way. In the Abbott's Road world people flowed into each other; they were like the countryside---you didn't have to look at it to know it, you didn't have to see all the trees and hear all the birds and each breeze that rustled the branches. Indeed, the more you looked and examined, the less you knew! And this was what he found in the middle class world; the more he looked at people the less he knew about them---the more he talked to Hanni and Dick the more puzzling they were for him; their presences didn't flow into



*Their silences were tense and anxious.*

him) Dick had told him that silence in a conversation always made him feel that the eyes of the <sup>school</sup> class were on him. But silence in Abbott's Road was always allowed to flow on, <sup>it produced</sup> producing a new mood of its own accord, a fresh turning-over of the spirit like a breath ~~of air~~ across the room, ~~so that the next remark seemed to actually come out of it.~~ The whole tone of life in Abbott's Road was different; it was another world like another civilisation, and slowly he had to get used to this new world, which ~~would~~ meant fighting his way through ~~various~~ <sup>one</sup> distortions <sup>after another</sup> but he couldn't go back now, he had no other world to live in! He would have to learn this new picture-perceiving state which every middle-class person <sup>seemed to take</sup> took <sup>ways</sup> for granted <sup>as</sup> the normal way <sup>of</sup> perceiving <sup>how the world was</sup> everyone in the world, ~~had~~. He would have to be strong as well, to keep harmony, informing himself about every step he took. It was no longer adequate for him to exist in himself, letting his moods come and go, forming his ideas about other people and their actions in a flowing way that ~~seemed~~ <sup>was</sup> simply a continuation of his moods. Now he had to have a <sup>clear</sup> picture of other people, deduced, when their behaviour wasn't clear, from himself. He had to take their interests into mental consideration, whereas, before, his natural sense of their presence had done that for him. Now there had to be a conscious sense of relation.' He had to listen to them alertly and then furnish his reply, in a kind of set give-and-take that wasn't a natural give-and-take of the heart that came easily, but on a different level, with a different rhythm; there had to be an acute mental awareness of the other person, as to what was going on in his mind, and what picture he had of ~~oneself~~ <sup>you</sup> <sup>your</sup> <sup>one's</sup> privacy was suspended; and the mind took on a planning activity, mapping out the form of the conversation, trying to find interesting and informative things to say. But in Abbott's Road the conversation needn't be at all informative; <sup>it</sup> it could go on in a kind of monologue, one person taking over from another. ~~He remembered how the major's wife in Sussex had told him that her father had impressed on her from early childhood the necessity of thinking before you speak. She said she'd always found it a strain but~~

*Ital*

*Ital*

In Abbott's Road thinking-before-you-spoke was ungracious; in this way working class manners were more gracious and subtle than middle class, and much nearer thearistocratic. The rule in Abbott's Road was that having silent thoughts behind your words was disrespectful; the mind throbbed on behind the words in a non-thinking way, as a man's eyes blazed in a non-seeing way. Talk was a state of being in Abbott's Road, not mental conclusions. It flowed from the the mouth without thought of performance. /<sup>But</sup> In the middle class world it was like making announcements: ideally, if you wanted the most attentive audience, your announcements were factual, well-thought-out and informative. It was like people being the official spokesmen of themselves. You carried about in your head a picture of yourself and you decoyed other people's minds into accepting this picture---of a straightforward person, or casual person, or clever, or carefree, or poor, or rich---whatever you wanted to be. And since the people you were talk~~ing~~g to did exactly the same, it was like pictures meeting pictures, all the excitement of being with people was gone, there was no mysterious timbre and richness in their voices, no quick, violent, unknown gaze. Men's faces were like little masks from which they peeped out defensively. These faces went on in front of the thoughts like a dance of the ~~xxix~~ veils, moving about to enchant and conceal and lie.

It wasn't enough for him in this new world to say 'I like this person' or 'I dislike that person', and leave it at that, with a feeling of natural rightness because, after all, he was only talking about his own feelings! No, now there had to be a judgement. There had to be a picture of the other person, you had to say if you disapproved of this or not. That was really what Dick was asking him---'What quick picture have you formed of the other person?' 'I dislike him' was now a social or moral judgement, no longer an autobiographical one. In Abbott's Road it was autobiographical---that was just how you felt about the other person, and you left him free. Now you were required to construct the other person on a little map of virtues and to say if you thought this little construction deserved life or not!

At once the authority of your own feelings was dead. That was the first thing to get a blow when you went into the middle class world: your own authority.

Did he like Dick and Hanni, really? Not really! He liked Mohammed---there was the wonderful, drugged state of friendship where no questions were asked. In Dick and Hanni there was kind of glittering, ~~mental~~ mental excitement--- which needed a party to come out; it always needed something else. Did he trust them? No! Yes! He couldn't tell! Which meant he ~~didn't~~!

It wasn't easy in this new world. The other person was always so hidden. If he was boisterous you had to consider that he might really be shy; if stern and reticent, really warm; if charming and straightforward, really cold. ~~The~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxthe publicxxxxxxx~~ You had to look round corners ~~xxxxxxx~~ all the time---round the pictures.

Dick always said what volumes he could tell about Hanni, if only the occasion arose. But these volumes were hidden from others. Perhaps only when she was alone with Dick did she unveil herself. Wasn't it true of them all, really? So it wasn't enough to say what you felt about a person! You might have got the wrong picture! So the brain had to keep checking and reconnoitring. He had to consider, for instance, that a remark of Dick's might mean the opposite of what it said; or that Hanni's silence for<sup>a</sup> few days might actually mean noise underneath. Feelings no longer established facts in a plain and robust way!

With Dick he never really felt himself. He felt quenched. He was a picture---partialities, a good mind, interesting, likeable---such a warm person! But the flame was gone. Dick couldn't see it.

The creatures in the fields gave their light, the birds and all the other beasts. But not men: Not in this world he'd come ~~xxxx~~ into.

Men no longer had God in each other.

He felt a quick mental revulsion from Dick. Dick's

attitude to other people was starved! He brought a starved attitude to his clients at the office---he couldn't invest them with the stature proper to them---they were 'old' this and 'old' that for him, elbowing each other pathetically for his attention! The middle class had come to strike the light out of people!

Dick was starved in sex---he was always afraid it would be snatched away from him. He was starved in thoughts---his thoughts were thin and mental, without the support of his life and his flesh!

But this was followed by concern. There was such a frail, transparent innocence in Dick, still intact, which had been in his eyes when they first met, at training-school. He could still remember it---he could see the light-blueness of Dick's eyes close to him, smiling, with their confiding twinkle.

He was exhausted? How long would he spend in this frightful labyrinth?

~~SECRET~~

Gerald brought in a portable radio one evening and switched  
 on the midnight news. <sup>to their astonishment</sup> It said that there would be a special call-  
 up of 'emergency reserve personnel', details of which would be ann-  
 ounced the next morning. There was a great whoop of indignation.  
 "What bloody fools!" Ginger cried. Glenning ~~as well~~ was worried.  
 Also the news said that the American ambassador had called on the  
 Prime Minister at his own request, and had stayed nearly an hour.  
 Glenning said that Russia and America both wanted Britain out of the  
 Middle East to open it up as a market for themselves, ~~and that this~~  
~~would happen.~~ Britain, ~~being broken by the last war,~~ had no benefits  
 to offer in that area any more: she could <sup>not</sup> ~~neither~~ invest <sup>enough</sup> big money  
 there <sup>or</sup> protect it with <sup>properly</sup> her arms. That was the reality, <sup>behind what</sup>  
~~was going on,~~ and no good could be done by calling up troops.  
 Pinkie yawned and went off

to bed. She said that Nigel had rung her up to say ~~that~~ he was going to volunteer if necessary; he'd just had dinner with some of his old buddies from the war, and they were going to do the same. ~~He hadn't forgotten his disgust of war, apparently:~~ <sup>it</sup> He said he was doing <sup>it</sup> this because he was certain there wouldn't be any bloodshed, and that there'd just be a sort of picnic in the desert. Pinkie added that he sounded wonderfully mellow, and <sup>had</sup> told her he'd met her friend Elizabeth Bewley-Patton, who was going to invite her up to her house for a week-end soon if there wasn't a 'show'. And he'd said she ought to see more of Elizabeth. Granville <sup>had met</sup> ~~wondered at this last remark.~~ <sup>Elizabeth only twice, briefly.</sup> ~~He'd met her a few times?~~ She was a healthy, bounding sort of person with flushed cheeks and dark, quick eyes. ~~There was nothing evasive about her.~~ <sup>on Pinkie.</sup> ~~Perhaps that was what~~ ~~fixhergaze~~ <sup>Nigel meant.</sup> She was a clear, healthy, sane influence <sup>direct,</sup> ~~In her gaze there was an extraordinary/optimistic gaiety.~~ ~~She never turned it this way and that reflectively as Pinkie did;~~ ~~Her eyes darted on to things with a dark, careless penetration.~~ She was full of questions always, <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ the utmost generous concern. Her talk was like a great waterfall, pauseless and deafening. ~~She was used to moving in high circles, as Pinkie said with a chuckle, "Old Lizzy's used to being heard, not that there's ever been any difficulty."~~ <sup>about it</sup> And there was a robust sexual energy in her; nothing distorted ~~inher~~ or held inwards. Next to her Pinkie looked a delicate, glittering, wayward ~~person.~~ ~~Perhaps Nigel knew something of her life now.~~

The ~~first~~ call-up affected only a few people, and hundreds of enquiries by potential volunteers were turned away at the recruiting offices. <sup>news</sup> A paper said that the country was almost equally divided on the issue. There were also small demonstrations outside the inactive recruiting offices; people carried placards throughout the hours of daylight past the doors, calling on everyone to 'recruit' their common sense and 'volunteer' for sanity. The following Sunday he went to the demonstration in Trafalgar Square alone and, so to speak, incognito. He didn't see Linger-Longer or any of the others. There was an immense crush of people, <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ primitively-rigged banners ~~held~~

waving about over their heads, 'THE CREED OF SLAUGHTER', 'The Empire Is Dead But won't Lie Down', 'Britain Faces Total Extermination With Stiff Upper Lip', 'Rubbish National Health Scheme says LEAVE IT TO NATURE', 'Reunion Of British War Heroes To Take Place This Month In Rbath To Practice Bayonet Drill On Live Women And Children.' There were mounted policemen on all sides, squashing people into a tight group here and distending them into a line there, the horses throwing up their heads and stepping delicately. He got caught in part of the crowd and was swept along into the square, close to one of the fountains where platforms had been erected; some people were being pushed on to the fountain and a young man had taken off his shoes and socks and was paddling in the water. There was <sup>a ready</sup> ~~some~~ cheerfulness everywhere; ~~and~~ it might have been a royal procession. Policemen on foot shouted out to the man in the fountain and drew nearer to him, elbowing <sup>through</sup> the crowd. Suddenly there would be motion and everyone would shift and move <sup>several yards</sup> as smoothly as a breath <sup>when</sup> ~~of air several yards~~ as the mounted police put pressure on at the edges. It was a warm day, the first they'd had for a week or more, with high clouds. He saw Indians in the crowd, negros and a few Arabs. But mostly there were contingents from local labour parties and peace-groups. Singing came from various parts of the square, and he could see a man on the platform conducting; it seemed to be 'Cavaliere Rossa', and on the other side they were singing 'Abide with me'. Suddenly <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ clergyman <sup>was</sup> ~~who~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~appeared on television~~ <sup>several times</sup> stepped in front of one of the microphones on the platform and cried, "Prayer-cards will be issued now! Nearly fifty thousand prayer-cards have been issued in the last fortnight! In the middle of the meeting there will be a two-minute silence, during which you are requested to read your prayer-card and offer it to God," which produced a slow roar of laughter like wind across the square; he said it all incredibly fast, staring at the sky with his head pushed forward, his long, pale hand clutching the stem of the microphone; and as abruptly he stepped aside. The young man in the fountain was arrested and carried shoulder-high through the crowd by two police-

men, without his shoes and socks; he kept calling to someone in the crowd by the fountain, craning his neck round, "Bring 'em to the station, cock! Oy, cock! Bring 'em to the station!" Then he looked down at one of the sweating policemen underneath him and said, "Constable, you're hurting my leg, I'll screw you when I get down!" The crowd was laughing, and some of them began singing, 'Let's all go down the Strand, Have a banana!'"

On the other side of the square there was something unpleasant. A police-horse had swept somebody off his feet and he'd started to attack the policeman, trying to pull him down from the saddle. There was a scuffle, and some angry cries, and the crowd in that area moved backwards and forwards as if being pulled as a whole to and fro; some police vans came round quickly, their bells going, and by the look of it a few people were arrested.

Speakers assembled on the platform and an appeal was put out for the Arab refugee fund. Then the speeches started, the usual political stuff where the moral vehemence had its effect on the crowd like clockwork. He walked away, down Whitehall. The voices echoed behind him, rising to the point of moral climax and then falling again. It was all rotten underneath! It was the same with Dick and Linger-Longer, the same with the newspapers, with the solemn, measured, admonitory leading articles that cashed in on every crisis to double and treble the sales---rotten! And Whitehall was strangely silent and deserted and ancient, without even buses, like a street made suddenly into a church, with idiot-cries for blood coming in from outside on the wind.

A woman spoke. He heard her call for a 'Middle East Charter' to be signed by all the powers with interests in that area. What a hope! The sound of the crowd, listening to her with rapt silence, then making a subdued murmur of approval, made not a great political roar as it had done with the other speakers, but a more intimate one of outraged decency. Her voice sounded wild, but in a touching way, also nagging, a bit shrewish; she seemed to be grappling with male sex, not just politics---male sex was to blame at bottom. "I was told last

week---!" Her voice drifted to and fro. "One of our boys---" The crowd made its roar and he heard her words, suddenly shouted above this roar, "I wonder what his mother---!" And then there was, "Crying shame!"

Granville hurried along past Westminster Abbey, no longer within earshot.

CHAPTER 17.

Then the crisis petered out. Russia proposed a peace-conference, with the first condition that Britain withdraw her troops. This was a clever move as it isolated Britain morally, by making the negotiations depend on her alone. Britain announced that troops would be withdrawn only at the request of the ~~sheikh~~ sheikh; but he requested it a few hours later.

There was suddenly another riot in Rubath in which a policeman had his feet cut off and was dragged through the streets by a howling mob. There was a banner, in English, which read, 'Humanity, happiness, habeas corpus.' Glenning said that the mob thought habeas corpus mean 'have a corpse' and picked on a policeman.

There was to be an international conference---certainly; then, the day after, there was to be one---perhaps. Anyway, the crisis was over. There was no word about Creed. A paper published a cartoon showing the sheikh in conference with army officers, but without Creed, and underneath there was the caption, 'Altogether dis-Creed-ited.' There was a melancholy ~~xxxxxTherexxx~~ stillness in the country. Glenning's 'little political anatomies', as Dick called them, had become a regular feature of kitchen-life since the crisis started. He said that America and Russia had got the world into two armed camps, in which Europe was the temporary 'no-man's-land'. And we were living in the middle of this no-man's-land, or at least on its westerly edge, which was why we had the feeling of not being quite real at times, not quite men, but 'no-men'. England hadn't really existed since 1938. After that she was a barracks, and still was. Like France, she was embalmed by both east and west into her old, dead self---the 'colonial

power', to serve identical interests. When the no-man's-land came alive again this would disappear overnight. The break with America would come. Dick didn't agree with this. He said that English interests were completely tied-up with American: there was such an intimate 'love-death' relationship that you wouldn't ever get a split. Glenning answered that this had nothing to do with it---there would be a break in American policies, the post-war theory of American civilisation inheriting the earth by shere moral righteousness would go out with a fizz, or a fart: and we would cease to be 'no-men'. Dick listened to him attentively, with a little smile of appreciation; it was so clearly a voice he could understand, quiet and balanced, never trying to rush him.

Everybody seemed to return to life now the crisis was over. He realised as if jolted back after a long sleep that he was due to make a report---he would have to go to the office--- that a few days before he;d met a strange, small woman called Joy Celeste---that his leave was being extended---that Grove existed! It was thrilling, horrifying, dazzling in one.

other countries of Europe because her thought was always being changed and invigorated by influences in what had once been the empire. He said that, paradoxically enough, insularity grew more inside mountain-ranges than on islands, because people needed to get out of islands and did. When people no longer needed American money, he said, the break would come; politics was like that. Dick didn't agree with this. He said that English interests were completely tied up with American: there was such an intimate 'love-death' relationship that you wouldn't ever get a split. Glenning agreed; he said a split wouldn't result, only a break in present American policies; the no-man's-land between Russia and America would again become an active influence. Dick listened to him attentively, with a little smile of appreciation; it was so clearly a voice he could understand, quiet and balanced, never trying to rush him.

Hanni was still sleeping at the house, and one evening Dick came in shortly before midnight 'prowling for sex', in Pinkie's words. He always had the same look, she said, of a boy who wanted to 'go' and couldn't hold it. He seemed to see nothing and didn't even nod <sup>hullo</sup> a greeting to Granville. Hanni was sitting in the music-room paring her toe-nails quietly when he came in, and, aware of his state, she decided to prolong it. She hardly looked up at him to say hullo and after he'd walked round the room several times she asked Pinkie in a quiet voice, "What about some coffee?" And Pinkie, catching the intention <sup>with a smile</sup>, said at once, "Yes, I'd love some!" They trooped up to the kitchen, Dick following in a disconsolate silence: <sup>at the door</sup> all courtesy and sense ~~of other people had left him~~; he ~~was~~ had a grim, held-in look on his face, and gazed at the floor a good deal, the edges of his mouth quivering ever so slightly ~~slightly~~ so that the light hairs of his beard moved. His beard had been under attack recently. Linger-Longer didn't like it especially; ~~she said~~ she said <sup>at first</sup> that while at first it had struck as manly, in a horrifying, 'bristly-brush' sort of way, <sup>but</sup> now it revolted her. <sup>said</sup> Dick clung to the idea that while she was 'ambivalent' about it he should leave it on: the effect of him

clean-shaven might be worse, and in any case Hanni had never seen him clean-shaven! Pinkie said the beard made him look bogus.

"Cock!" Dick cried. "It goes perfectly with a strict black suit and a dark tie! Because it's blond and untidy! It makes people think twice about me---they're always looking across the table to see if I'm really bogus or not---I can feel them! And that means they're giving me their full attention, which in ~~xxxx~~ business is an awful lot! Whereas your clean-shaven man lays his cards on the table much too soon. A little twitch of the mouth and he's finished! Also," he added, "the beard indicates possibly a wild past but the black suit raps this idea soundly over the knuckles---thus, an interesting conflict is set up in the spectator!"

His beard was more of a goatee than what he called a 'bush', he said. He couldn't stand men with bad-smelling bushes round their chops! Nobody could say his was a dark, nasty <sup>thing</sup>; it was blond and flimsy, golden in the summer; in a word, 'Tudor'.


At last, over the coffee, Hanni was got to bed. As the bed downstairs was small they decided to sleep in one of the ramshackle attic-rooms, immediately above Pinkie and Granville.

In the middle of the night he was woken suddenly. The floor-boards creaked and bumped overhead, and the bed moved. ~~Granville~~ <sup>He</sup> thought drowsily, 'They're making love', and tried to sleep again. Pinkie was always joking about how Dick was a ~~stickler~~ stickler for 'new positions'; and now he seemed to be running, walking, hanging on to things, heaving at the bed, coughing, kicking at something, chuckling, jumping up and down, all in the most grotesque way. Granville glanced at the luminous alarm-clock---three in the morning. Had they been at it all this time?

Then there was the sound of a powerful, regular beating like a drum, shaking the whole house, and he heard, when there was sudden quiet, two strange cries, ~~which extended the drumming~~ first Hanni's, like a long, agonised laugh, and a few seconds later Dick's, like a man coughing in thick smoke, followed by a prolonged moan. He tried to stop his ~~eyes~~ ears in the

in the pillow against the intimacy of their sounds, but he couldn't. Pinkie still slept soundly. What would she have said? She would have joked about it, perhaps. But there was now silence, absolute, flat, and he was left alone with those intimate sounds, like a challenge to his whole self.

He told himself, with a dawning and pained awareness, that he'd heard the sound of real sex and that this wasn't what he and Pinkie had! Alone---left with these sounds---he couldn't joke, as he might have with Pinkie, rather tenderly, chuckling. If only she'd woken! But he was alone---it was a strange feeling---he was alone with someone's else's intimacy which he could never talk or joke away but would have to resolve in his own life. It was like a terrible task suddenly dropped in front of him, bonk, in the middle of the night.



To p. 568

~~to face it and brood on it. He'd never been aware of it before as a fact that stood before him, undeniable and separate. He'd never been able to look into other people to see what their love was, and compare it with his; but~~

n.p. now he could; Dick and Hanni had shown him the way. He couldn't sleep all night. There was perfect silence upstairs: the natural after-sleep, with all the tissues satisfied. He lay, turning and sweating. Only when dawn came did he doze off into a thin, troubled sleep. Then he woke at eight o'clock, before Pinkie, ~~feeling~~ worn out. He'd had nightmares and felt sick. When the other three ~~were~~ left the house for work he got up, having simulated sleep while Pinkie was dressing. ~~if he didn't wake for the alarm she always left him; she said he'd be back to the grind soon enough.~~ He felt an itching perspiration all over his face and everything looked grim and bilious to him: he didn't even enjoy his precious breakfast alone in the kitchen. He was in a completely sunken state. But there was a pain over and above ~~this; with these,~~ he was aware of being in a confused and hidden way ashamed of not having slept.

How strange! It seemed that he was ashamed of having suffered during the night; there was a double sensation all the time, ~~not just the problem that~~ and then the shame of it. His life ~~had come to a halt in the night~~ had fallen into chaos for the space of a night---that seemed to be the trouble; it had departed from the routine; he hadn't slept at the publicly appointed time! His thoughts in the night had had a wildness that couldn't be contained in the clear waking hours; they couldn't be received into his life. He thought of trying to put his experience of the night into words, ~~and it couldn't be done, he couldn't fit it in to the daylight hours.~~ The sensation was like wanting to vomit but being unable to; he couldn't pass the experience through him, and he couldn't get rid of it; he couldn't joke about it, as the daylight hours seemed to require, and he couldn't put it in the necessary impersonal language either; to make it a serious topic! Now he'd often had a sleepless night in Basrah, with similar thoughts, too. What was the difference? He'd quite enjoyed ~~it~~ <sup>them</sup> out there, usually. Or rather, he'd accepted ~~it~~ <sup>them</sup>; he'd absorbed the

raw, jagged thoughts into his life, almost with pleasure, at their prodigal violence. ~~Usually it had been~~ ~~He hadn't sweated and turned.~~ ~~It had usually seemed like a~~ ~~journey into the strange night~~ <sup>He remembered Basrah at night,</sup> the stars outside fantastically bright and twinkling, so that often he <sup>had</sup> leaned up on his elbows to make sure that they were stars and not <sup>s</sup> a silver light someone was holding up! <sup>Deep as they had been,</sup> ~~rest from the endless routine of waking and sleeping that blocked out the~~ ~~rhythm beyond;~~ ~~It was a strange country where everyone was asleep and there~~ ~~were~~ no bitter, dusty thoughts; where the earth was absorbed for once into the silence all round it, so that one could touch everything at the heart, without men's voices, in real state! He remembered lying in his room through those long, cool, silent nights when the palm-leaves moved outside, making their faint tinkle, and of being aware that the silence was teaching him something; it was the sensation of getting beyond the ordinary veil of life, <sup>to thoughts that had a prodigal violence!</sup> he felt joined to nothing, as if he'd

n.p.

But now the night flung him out; ~~if Pinkie had failed to rise as well~~ ~~been brought into life but then been abandoned naked,~~ ~~clinging~~ ~~everything~~ ~~it would have been better, it would have relieved him of the shame of having~~ ~~suffered incomprehensible.~~ ~~Meanwhile his mind clacked and revolved in a~~ ~~stagnant, grey void, trying to find its way to a connection which would bring~~ ~~the rhythm and flow of life back, while his body lay inert and incongruous~~ ~~underneath this activity, without function, the blood sluggish and the limbs~~ ~~heavy.~~ ~~Max~~ The night had broken an essential fibre in him; he was worn and pale all the way through, with the sensation that he was discarded for ever and would continue like this, among the dead, with only his mind limping on trying to perceive life through its bloodless little channels, trying to do service for the body! His feelings in the night were all crushed and herded into a frightened corner; there was no allowance for them in the life round him; there was simply nothing to be said about them, and other people's faces, even Pinkie's, seemed not to have in their tiny lines and crevices the possibility of hearing about such things, <sup>just as his own</sup> ~~might bear the same message to her;~~ ~~It was as if~~ in the life all round him, in the streets, in the conversations they all had in the kitchen, in the

finding / meaningless.

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buses~~e~~ that stopped and started regularly <sup>every</sup> all day in the distance, in the newspapers, in the way people walked, in the flat shop-windows, in the way he himself had learned to talk now, there was <sup>a kind of</sup> ~~an~~ agreement to close <sup>the night-reality out.</sup> reality ~~off~~ <sup>also rendered</sup> ~~round with a fence, which made for safety but~~ <sup>outside</sup> ~~with~~ everything tropical and wild outside, threatening to break through the fence, because it was all left untended. There must be nothing accidental or corrupt. No corruption of the heart was to be seen. The lonely, dark, grim hours <sup>were only</sup> ~~were~~ to be mentioned, as they ~~were~~ to be seen, ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> a little abstract line ~~drawing~~ <sup>the sign of stress!</sup> from the eyes or the mouth, <sup>no doubt</sup> the sign of stress, in people's faces. When Pinkie came home in the evening he would talk to her about the report, which <sup>at the moment</sup> he was unfit to touch, or ask her about the office; or she would tell him the latest about Dick from Hanni. <sup>But</sup> ~~And~~ his feelings of the night <sup>— no!</sup> would pass; they wouldn't be absorbed into his flesh, into wisdom, they wouldn't even pass into his face as an extra sadness as they would <sup>have</sup> in Mohammed's; they would die out, and he would hope to forget them, so that the shame that had followed them would die, too! And then his face would carry the shame no longer; he would be fit for the world, and then later other dark and accidental feelings would rise in him, and the same would begin again! His feelings would die into the corpse of experience, one experience rejecting the last ~~previous~~ one. How could he establish the meaning of these accidental vapours that rose under his nostrils in the dead of night, when there was no solitude, when he couldn't separate himself from Pinkie, when his body seemed not to be his own, when this fenced world outside was on the move all the time, when the streets pounded and hammered with recognition of the fenced life but not of the other, which had no form of speech, when <sup>only the fenced life</sup> it was present to him all the time, when it was in his own bed, when it lay in every wall of the house he was in, when it was written in the papers he read? How could <sup>he</sup> ~~he~~ establish the meaning alone? He would have to get away! He would have to suffer ~~agonizing~~ loneliness, perhaps in Basrah, until his true voice began to speak to him, in candour, and he could pick his way gradually through his life

n.p.

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unravelling it from the other voices that had been dinning in his ears.  
~~We were so little alone, he thought, that our own true rhythms were unable to establish themselves; and so we had to fight them back with shame when they threatened the universal public rhythm; shame prevented us from giving ourselves to other people, and it disciplined our gestures and expressions;~~ <sup>When</sup> Pinkie came back that evening he would be ready for her, hiding his concern and his nakedness of the night.

All through the day he heard the cries Dick and Hanni had made. He was stunned in his body. What ~~an~~ <sup>own</sup> ~~strange~~ quietness his marriage had! ~~They~~ <sup>When</sup> ~~sighed~~ and made a peculiar rustling and shifting as if some suffering was <sup>involved.</sup> ~~involved.~~ <sup>Such</sup> It was like a solemn act, requiring religious attentions! And Dick and Hanni abandoned themselves to pleasure. <sup>PLEASURE!</sup> That was the stark comparison. What hold could he have on her, then? There was a treaty between them, but no mutual interests: that didn't make a good alliance. <sup>of</sup> The cries Dick and Hanni ~~had made~~ were like voices telling him about his life. Alone, how could he have found out what he and Pinkie were missing? Gradually a cloud had been growing round them, of their own touches and gestures, so that nothing definite could be told any more, even about the outside world! ~~For~~ <sup>itals</sup> all they knew everyone else in the world was the same, including Hanni and Dick. <sup>itals</sup> But on the other hand only he was hoodwinked; Pinkie had taken the way out. Their love was limp and frail. What was the matter with him, not to have recognised this? Their bodies didn't exist, ~~for each other.~~ Once Dick had asked Pinkie, "What sort of women does Pip like?" And she replied with some surprise at the question, "None! He isn't like that at all!" ~~Dick told him this afterwards with a chuckle. But he added that Pinkie had also said, paradoxically, that he was 'the randiest ketch' she had ever 'taken into port', but he was naturally monogamist, so that his randiness was directed at her, which was exhausting.~~ <sup>one of</sup> <sup>the</sup> His thoughts were quite clear now. <sup>l.c.</sup> She didn't connect his body with pleasure! <sup>for granted</sup> And he'd taken this quiet as a matter of course all these years. ~~She could see how he might excite~~

n.p.
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 He often tried to talk ~~to her~~ about 'Stratford' ~~with his words~~ ~~now~~ ~~for~~ ~~sex~~ and encourage her to repeat it as a matter of will. He tried to break through their friendship, that marred everything, and took away the mystery ~~of their bodies~~, by using it as a starting-point. He said they shouldn't go at the matter so solemnly; it was a light thing. Once he talked to her for nearly two hours, ~~about it~~, pacing round the room in his orang-utang fashion; she only nodded at everything, agreeing listlessly and looking vague. They shouldn't go at it with their personalities, he'd said. There should be no 'you' or 'I'. They ought to follow their appetites selfishly, he said, as if they were alone, and then they'd find something waiting for them, an extraordinary natural pleasure, as at Stratford! ~~This embarrassed her~~ and she looked sick. He wanted a speechless love, he said, one in which there would be new connections of friendship and loyalty. But here he was trying to get it by means of speech! He knew while he was talking that it couldn't be done, nothing could be done in this talking manner. It made her even more

always

~~her~~ in body, and she had the suffocating look as, when he talked too much; she sometimes put her hand up to her mouth when his presence was too much for her, and made as if too vomit, her eyes closed in a martyred way, she nearly did it this time. He said they had to learn how to become like a limb in the other's side, ~~and~~ unconscious; and ~~then~~ a sturdy ~~and~~ confidence would grow up between them, ~~and~~ they would be able to tell each other everything, their ~~own~~ hidden and outlandish desires, ~~and~~ their yearnings, ~~in~~ ~~fact~~ ~~openness~~, so that they were left with their bodies as things almost beyond them, lying in their own mystery, which they talked about without fear, then they would be more separate from each other, ~~in~~ a good way, and closer in a good way. But she only murmured, "How awful", when he mentioned being limbs in each other's sides. She thought of being a dutiful wife, and smelling of the kitchen, and giving birth to one child after another; that was what she took him to be advocating. Her figure would slump. No, she didn't want to be a limb in his side! She hated the idea of getting fat;

n.p.

Immediately after this talk she went on a slimming diet, and began to look pale and boyish, with a kind of martyred putridity in her face. ~~He had stopped talking when she gave the tell-tale sign of putting her hand up to her mouth, closing her eyes?~~

n.p.

There was a letter from the United Kingdom Compound in Basrah, about abill. 'Dear Mr. Granville,' it said, 'I have been informed by <sup>Technical</sup> ~~Textile~~ Industries Management Ltd. that you are at present in the U.K. for a period of two months vacation. May I point out that there is an outstanding bill with us in your name for the sum of £11.14.2. and that in the circumstances a cheque by return post would be appreciated. Residents of the Compound settle accounts weekly and your bill having been outstanding over two months the Residents committee has decided <sup>Compound</sup> privileges can no longer be extended to you.' It was signed, 'Yours faithfully, M. Scriven', which in his disabled state he read as 'Yours fearfully, M. Craven.' ~~Such~~ letters like that had an extraordinary power to arrive on the day of lowest ebb, the tone was

n.p.



Such letters like that had an extraordinary power to arrive on the day of lowest ebb, the tone was

→ 'You little piece of iron in the English soul,' he thought. 'What makes you ~~so~~ so proud to be inhuman?'

n.p.

~~His teeth began to chatter with the accumulated distress; the kitchen was cold and had a bare look in the dull light; the weather was ~~so~~ overcast and chilly, <sup>again.</sup> He was aware that perhaps he and Pinkie had caused resentment in the Compound; there had been talk, perhaps, about her dancing at the Cabala, where none of the Compound-members went; she didn't get on with the women; they found her uppish and lacking in feminine intimacy; in her accent they found something haughty. She wasn't the type at all for the Compound. She'd probably got the bill in Basrah and screwed it up. It was from the 'Liberty Stores' where they sometimes shopped.~~

n.p.

~~He screwed the letter up and threw it out of the kitchen window. There was no question of his paying the bill at present.~~ He'd been along to the office to draw his monthly cheque and found that his situation wasn't nearly as good as he'd thought; his cheques had been sent off to Basrah in the normal way, but his bank there had sent them back to his London account, thinking that these were his instructions, ~~where~~ as he <sup>had</sup> told them to send only the first one; <sup>←</sup> thus he'd been drawing from the bottom of the kitty without realising it! He was staggered when he saw how much he'd spent in the last month; for safety he deposited the price of an air ticket to Basrah with the cashier; to go on he'd have to borrow from Pinkie. However much he earned he never seemed to have any in his pocket, Pinkie was the same; they suddenly lavished it on a party or dinner out.

Pinkie returned that evening with Hanni and Dick, in a cheerful party; his sleepless night was forgotten at once. Pinkie put a question unexpectedly after dinner; would Christ be crucified if he came on earth <sup>(again?)</sup>

"Do you mean if he came in period costume or modern dress?" Dick asked.

"Oh, in modern dress!"

Dick said with a smile that he'd probably 'fill Albert Hall', representing as he would 'Charlie God'. Granville said he'd certainly be crucified again, though he might not be put on a cross or stoned. Hanni was against this; she agreed with Dick and added that people were different nowadays; when Granville asked what she meant by 'different' she said 'less bigotted'. Pinkie was non-committal, gazing at them all in turn. It was a strange question coming from her, and he looked at her sideways, searching for a clue in her face, but there was none. That evening she had a light, vanishing quality in her face, as if she'd been through something ~~extraordinarily~~ purifying. In the discussion Dick talked about Christ as 'Charlie God, Junior'. ~~Later~~

imp. Granville said something vague, rather under his breath---that we were all serving 'a silent meaning' in all our haphazard thoughts and actions every day. He said it almost to himself, gazing at the table. Dick looked at him strangely and seemed just about to say something facetious when he stopped, catching the seriousness in Granville's face, and asked quietly, "How do you mean?"

"Well---!"

~~But~~ Before he could reply Dick leaned across the table so that his face was very close, his eyes screwed up, with their little twinkle of curiosity, and asked almost in a whisper, "Do you really believe all that caper about God, Pip? I never thought I'd know somebody intimately who did! Do you think old Charles God is up there when the show's over, sitting on the judgement seat, and all that caper?"

"No," Granville said, "I didn't mean exactly that."

"What silent meaning are you talking about, then?" He seemed genuinely to want to know---<sup>to</sup> be told something.

"Well, a kind of order behind things!"

"But when do we find out what the order is?" Dick asked.

"We don't!"

"How do you know it's there, then?"

"All I mean is we can't ever know with our minds. You're asking for

an order we can talk about. But this is something our minds can't deal with. So we shall never know!"

"Well, how do you know, then? If you'll forgive the embarrassing question?"

"I know with what there is in me that's different from my mind."

"It's a feeling?"

"Yes."

<sup>This</sup> ~~It~~ was an anti-climax for Dick; ~~Granville could now see that~~ he had genuinely wanted to find out something!

"But you don't believe in judgement day?" Dick asked him.

After a pause he said unwillingly, "No!" It buried the argument <sup>and finally for</sup> ~~them~~

n.p.

~~Dick's point of view~~ He was disappointed because he felt that Granville had after all the same sort of mind as his own, and couldn't therefore explain the religious point of view, which he had hoped, out of curiosity. → And the brief discussion stung Granville to an awareness of his own insecure position: why

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was he <sup>not</sup> unwilling to say he ~~didn't~~ believe in judgement day? <sup>Because he didn't!</sup> He resolved to go through his reflections on the night of the eclipse bit by bit soon, for he felt he had answered that question adequately then; but at the moment he could

n.p.

reflect on nothing! Dick waited for him to go on talking but he didn't; he sat locked in silence, staring fixedly at the table. He thought he might try to unravel the matter, for himself and Dick; but when he looked up to begin ~~talking~~ Dick was fondling Hanni's hair with an intimate smile and saying, "Well, what about it?", meaning they should go home.

#

~~Hanni had now returned to Hampton Court. She said she found it in a hell of a mess, but Dick claimed that this had all been done the evening before she came back, when he gave dinner to Linger-Longer 'in a last effort'. The crisis had passed over completely now, and the international conference hadn't taken place; the newspapers had other subjects. The sheikh of Rubath produced, in committee with his officer-cabinet, a White Paper on 'national reconstruction', not that there had ever been much construction, as the phrase~~

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He went to the office and arranged for his files to be brought up.

Nevinson didn't ask to see him. The secretary he was given was tall and non-committal, <sup>with bright yellow hair and a long face;</sup> she shook hands with him quickly, with a charm that came and went in a shy, intimidated way, her smile fading quickly and as quickly returning. Everything about her was meticulous, and she walked with straight symmetrical but easy steps, her high heels making a perfectly regular sound on the floor. [The office he'd been given was tiny, overlooking a bombed site; it had a gas-fire and panelled walls, and the dome of St. Paul's was close by, huge and grey, like a pencil drawing. He stayed there all day <sup>getting</sup> ~~handling~~ the files <sup>in order;</sup> ~~put~~ in place, but his work wasn't to start for a week or so, when the secretary would be free. <sup>She took down some</sup> ~~It was pleasant having a secretary~~ <sup>notes</sup> ~~taking down notes~~ for him in a business-like way, her lips tight together with concentration, pausing when he paused so that what he said <sup>seemed to have more</sup> ~~was given an extra~~ importance. <sup>than it really did.</sup> The room was dim with a tasselled light, and the desk was low, across one corner, with a rather gorgeous persian carpet ~~underneath~~. She told him that usually one of the directors used <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ room, as his 'funk-hole'; she smiled at him pleasantly when she said this, with a sudden unexpected penetrating glance, slipping from her perfection for ~~an instant~~. Later he met Glemming downstairs and learned that she was the best secretary in the place and was reserved for directors or visitors; she sometimes had to show them the sights of London, 'As a sort of top-class whore', <sup>he added.</sup> She was called among the

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n.p.

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directors 'the secret weapon' <sup>and was</sup> ~~being~~ used ~~sometimes~~ to soften up hard clients.' Nevinson would say, "It's no good---we'll have to use the secret weapon!"

He yearned to get down to work at once. The room had ~~still~~ an inviting, safe, enclosed look; it lay at the end of a quiet corridor where few people passed, on the directors' floor. He would like to come there every day. He wanted to sink himself in it, lead Dick's sort of life, not go abroad any more on that endless quest. Like Bick he <sup>would</sup> arrive in the morning at the same time; <sup>every day</sup> the little office would be a haven for him, away from the raw, aching realities of home; he'd go back in the evening quiet and renewed, seeing the house as a strange, vivid country where something <sup>fresh</sup> ~~new~~ would be offered, <sup>him</sup> a kind of theatre that started the moment he opened the door, bright and glittering, with gaudy, soft colours, and the raw desires would return, ~~exciting~~ <sup>and yet exciting</sup> and dismaying/him, making his heart beat, <sup>nearly</sup> perilous/to the point, ~~nearly~~ <sup>self-</sup> of his/extinction, in an unexpected, grim, trembling rapture. Why didn't he accept the <sup>facts</sup> ~~form~~ of <sup>his</sup> ~~their~~ marriage, <sup>to Pinkie</sup> in sanity? Even now---as he stood beside the low, elegant desk with its polished top, he could face the existence of Grove <sup>better</sup> ~~quite~~ comfortably; <sup>even!</sup> He could see them kissing; they slept together: what was wrong in that? The cosy little office saw nothing unusual about it! There were just facts, and other facts to counter them. Why didn't he consult his own pleasures as Dick did? Why not live like Mohammed, taking women as they came his way; and when nothing came his way, going to the brothel? Why was he afraid of going back to Basrah alone? The brothels were pleasant <sup>here</sup> One could drink in them and pass an evening! He'd done it: sat in one of the small rooms with wooden floors while the girls passed to and fro along a gallery outside; <sup>in</sup> ~~with~~ <sup>courtyard</sup> the ~~courtyard~~ below <sup>had</sup> ~~where~~ chickens clucked and <sup>run</sup> ~~ran~~ all day, and men <sup>had</sup> ~~came~~ in noisily through the entrance-gate calling for madame. Why was he hemming his life in? Why couldn't he bring his body into the open? Dick had shown him the way, for London! There was now a chance to imitate Dick's dandyism; he thought of him as a dandy, ~~but~~

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serious and philosophical; a dandy of the night, in the glittering mystery; going out alone, shorn of everything familiar, without a wife, home, only a self that put on a new black mask for the journey! Granville could imagine him so well with a velvet mask held up on a little stick, only his mouth showing, moist, full, innocent, taking relish in itself, nearly smiling, for the mystical journey of sex.

He remembered the solicitor Ismail Beg in Basrah, a tall, wild Kurd who always wore the most beautiful American duck-suits and a panama hat, and poured arak down his throat in the evening until he was swaying <sup>about</sup> ~~all over~~ the place and calling everyone ~~in sight~~, except Granville, for whom he had a special, protective intimacy, <sup>a</sup> 'buffalo' and <sup>or</sup> 'dog#-son#-of-dog#';) Usually <sup>he and Granville</sup> ~~they~~ went to a cabaret together, where heavy Kurds and Arabs sat at tables glowering at a half-naked girl on the stage while she revolved her hips, making her head go to and fro sideways without moving her neck. Ismail would tower above them in his superb western suit, while they laughed at him sheepishly, their robes pulled up to show their socks and suspenders. He was a clown <sup>for them</sup> ~~in their eyes~~ but also awesome, a rich man afraid of no one. They withered and looked away under his blazing glance. He owned a number of brothels and sometimes took Granville on a 'tour of inspection' in the evening, to drink brandy or arak in one of the best rooms with the madame, while trade went on in the adjoining compartments. Madame would be called out every few minutes to settle a bill or stop a quarrel. A girl would rush in calling for the douche and ~~the~~ permanganate of potash because a 'buffalo' had broken his french letters, while the 'buffalo' swore by Allah downstairs in the courtyard, at the top of his voice, that the rubber they used was like paper, and he hoped the 'bint al gawad', the pimp's daughter, would make a better mother than she'd made a fuck! Huge <sup>e</sup> shikhs tumbled along the wooden gallery in the evening, their chauffeurs waiting outside in Cadillacs and Oldsmobiles. They would come in roaring from the cabarets, or quiet

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like children, their fat hands shining with jewels, their cloaks magnificent; they would stake whole villages over poker in the side-rooms, or buy one of the girls for a week if they took a fancy to her. The madames were always calm and humorous; capable women past their youth. And they held <sup>Ismail</sup> ~~Khalid~~ Beg in ~~special~~ esteem. They would settle him comfortably in an armchair however drunk he was, and clap their hands for a bottle of brandy, putting little bowls of nuts in front of him, and hot <sup>fried</sup> ~~fired~~ chicken-livers. ~~It wasn't that he owned the places; they each had power in their way, equal with his; but they seemed to expect justice from him; and his~~ ~~wildness, which that was always threatening his safety, drew their love; they~~ shook their heads and gave him more brandy. He would pull the girls close to him when they came in and put his hand up their skirts to give them a pinch and make them scream; he would jump up and do a grotesque dance with his eyes closed, towering above everybody, snapping his fingers and moving his head sideways like the girls in the cabarets. He pissed over the <sup>corners of the</sup> cars outside while the chauffeurs---dogs-sons-of-dogs---stared at him heavily from inside, afraid to say anything. And sometimes he made a strange yell that filled the narrow alleyways of the brothel quarter, rising and falling, like a cry that might be heard in the mountains, among the tribesmen. He boasted; he said he could pick up a handkerchief from the ground with his teeth while at <sup>f</sup> full gallop on horseback, and he'd won many best doing this in Krudistan! ~~and~~ he was a warrior, a prince---hence, the name Beg---greatly respected, feared, hated by the dogs-sons-of-dogs; <sup>And an</sup> ~~And~~ influence on the government, a friend of the king; adored by his wife; unhappy! He had one weakness, he said, and smiled, leaving Granville to think what it was. ~~It was either drink or women; he had his fill of both. But if he intended to sleep~~ <sup>his</sup> with one of the women he would go out alone and not call on Granville; ~~perhaps~~ he feared that it would get to his wife; when he was drunk she shouted at him, and it was clear he feared her. He kept <sup>his wife</sup> ~~her~~ under more or less ~~lock~~ lock and key, afraid of a dog-son-of-a-dog getting into the house and making

love to her. Sometimes he leaned out of his bedroom window at night, ~~his~~  
~~wife said,~~ and fired shots into the garden, thinking there were men below.  
 Unlike the other women of Basrah <sup>his wife</sup> she didn't wear the veil; she came from  
 Beirut, the daughter of a merchant who spoke French, and she smarted all the  
 time against being cooped up in <sup>a</sup> the house from morning till night. She would  
 pour Ismail's arak into the potted plants in the sitting room when he wasn't  
 looking, but the moment she'd done this he would turn round to her slowly with  
 a smile full of graciousness and say, "You whore, fill my glass again," however  
 drunk he was. He told Granville that the only men who had seen her, apart  
 from him, were his brother and the public prosecutor. She was obsessed by  
 the idea that other women were pursuing him all the time; and he encouraged  
 the idea. She even wrote to Pinkie a note in French accusing her of trying to  
 charm him; she said she had always considered English <sup>e</sup> woman, until now, 'above  
 others in matters of honour.' Granville showed the note to Ismail and he  
 laughed, slapping his hip; and then he added, giving him a <sup>o</sup> r<sup>u</sup>guish glance,  
 "Is she trying to charm me?"

~~There was one madame they visited more than others. Ismail told him~~  
~~she'd been his mistress for ten years before he married, and that he'd instal-~~  
~~led her in a little <sup>taken</sup> house by the river, then given her this brothel.~~ <sup>to the evening of the day.</sup> She  
~~always looked at him with vague, dreaming eyes, infatuated like a girl, and~~  
~~remembered the past with him. She told Granville he'd been a 'fine young~~  
~~man'; the most generous person she knew. Ismail said she was the finest~~  
~~between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, and she looked away laugh-~~  
~~ing, clapping her hands together.~~ <sup>who</sup> She was ~~now~~ plump, with a pale sallowness  
 that shone in an intriguing way, like a light in her, hardly disclosed,  
 making her eyes extraordinarily dark; she stood straighter and taller than  
 the other girls, in an immovable way; they looked small and awkward next to  
 her, clucking round her like hens, while she remained immovable, smiling, in  
 her strange pallor. She was in the prime of life and, Ismail said, she was  
 'as good as ever', though the flush of youth had gone. Would Granville like

*is my her? Or would he prefer one of the girls?*

~~one of the girls or madame? / Ismail asked him this one evening during a~~  
 pause. Which would he like? The girls were all 'bits of velvet', he said,  
 but madame was 'a queen.' And he laughed, his eyes twinkling, as he gazed at  
 Granville waiting for a reply. Granville said nothing, smiling also, watch-  
 ing the madame. "Ah, I know," Ismail said; ~~it was the madame Granville~~  
~~wanted, he admitted the choice; women were interesting when they were past~~  
~~the flush of youth.~~ Ismail said to him again, "Tell me!" *he could resist* / ~~And he added~~ with  
 a laugh, "Of course, I shall tell your wife!" Granville shook his head after  
 a time and said, "Another evening!" He'd remembered Pinkie, *his face looking at him* and compassion  
 overwhelmed him, ~~he'd been on the threshold of the mystery; his life with~~  
~~Pinkie might have been different after that; he was offered the power, and~~  
~~he flinched; he couldn't do it.~~ Ismail thought he was worried that he'd *would really*  
 say something to Pinkie and kept repeating, "No, no, you're my brother, you're  
 my brother!" And he *Ismail* tried to tantalise him further: "Go on, isn't she  
 magnificent? Look at her!" *the woman stood there smiling, her eyebrows*  
~~raised, waiting to go into one of the compartments.~~ ~~Ismail said that she~~  
~~never slept with the men, she was the madame, but that for him, because his~~  
~~word was everything to her, she would do it.~~ Granville began to ache with  
 tantalised desire, but his will gripped him, and he poured himself another  
 brandy, shaking his head with a smile, for all the world as if he was tired  
 and only wanted a little talk, ~~as Ismail might~~ *had* / There it *had* ended! Why *had* he  
 done that? *h.p.* He'd had occasion since his return to London to think of that  
 incident again and again, wondering if he wouldn't be in a stronger position  
 now if he'd performed ~~that~~ *the that* mystical act of self-release! ~~But he'd remained~~  
~~in prison, and Pinkie had taken the first step outside.~~ *Ruthless well* / ~~She~~ would have been  
 released ~~from so much pressure.~~ if he'd done it; ~~it would have taken his~~  
~~expectant gaze off her; good husbands were more a burden to women than bad,~~  
~~he thought, why didn't he give her the excitement of a man who drank and~~  
~~whored and didn't give a damn, and bring the look in her eyes that he'd seen~~  
~~in the madame's when she looked at Ismail? He would have come back to her~~

*J*

*e. n.p.*

*D.M.*

"NIGHT OF  
THE ECLIPSE"

—REJECTED  
PAGES and  
NEWLY TYPED  
INSERTIONS  
[CARBON COPY].

He said that the public school only taught a veneer; and that under his methodical veneer Dick was inefficient. As long as the essentials of his work were done, with that decorative repose of his, he didn't worry. He got on at the office, Glenning said, because his superiors were as inefficient as he was, and as frightened of talent. If organisation was needed Dick was an absolute disaster: he would 'gum up any works'. He couldn't even clip a report together so that the pages were right. There was never any fear of him getting so interested in any part of his work that it would embarrass his superiors: the public school had also taught a horror of the 'earnest'.

The Glenning said he had been taught as a child in Johannesburg to believe in the probity and decency and rectitude of these people, and then he had seen the truth for himself. Underneath their veneer politeness and veneer interest and veneer and magnanimity there was 'angry egotism, sometimes erupting into cruelty'. The public schools taught these people how to exercise power, and unchallenged power at that. But if the power didn't exist any more? All you got was poor character, dressed up pathetically to look the part, in symbols (like the casual 'wit') which nobody understood any more, even English people. You got a man who would stoop to any little meannesses when in a tight spot. Deprive the wealthy child of his wealth and you will often see a vile little monster of outrageous appetites emerge, and that was the case with England's dead army of power servants with their strained accents, 'shadow gentlemen for the shadow empire'.

Dick admired Glenning: he listened to it all with genial equanimity. There lay his good ness.

2

"It looks as if you won't ever be going back to Basrah," Pinkie said to him.

He noticed she said 'you' again, <sup>not 'we'!</sup> "Oh, I don't know," he replied. "It'll probably blow over!"

In the middle of all this his parents came over. It was a relief. They were the first sane voices he'd heard for days. ~~as they sat there he was brought back to a sense of place, anchored again, with intimate thoughts. It was still distant for them, the crisis, the world outside Abbott's Field had always been distant.~~ <sup>Strongly</sup> The moment they came into the doorway downstairs he felt a new flush of life. He'd asked Pinkie to get off early from the office, and she was upstairs getting the tea. Also Hanni, to his surprise, said she'd come, ~~and return to the office in the evening.~~

They stood there smiling at him, the street behind them, and he was aware at once that his usual life in the house was in a ~~constant~~ <sup>different</sup> rhythm, slow and halting, in a numbed silence, and that theirs was quick, with <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ throb of life in it, ~~and a silence as well, but~~ <sup>its</sup> silence full of change and motion. ~~There was a sense of bustle, but of life, not of the heavy will or mind forcing the pace, it was the exciting, rustle of a dress before a party, not the important sound of status and power; it was the rustle of intimate life, as in childhood.~~ For a moment he felt like a child ~~as he stood there greeting them, as if caught up in their arms again, his breath taken away.~~

~~"Hello, son!"~~

~~He bent down to kiss his mother as she stepped into the dark hall, and she murmured with a smile, her cheeks flushed, "Come on, about time~~



~~Glennings said he was sure British troops had not taken part, and that the others were against him. One of the girls said there was to be a demonstration the following Sunday at Trafalgar Square and everybody ought to turn out. Volunteers were being asked to carry banners, and she said there was to be a collection for an Arab refugee fund. Glennings laughed and said it was the first time he'd heard one of her crowd getting interested in politics. It turned out that the jazz club she belonged to had a few people in the labour movement, among them her boyfriend. He was getting all the girls down~~

Pinkie asked Dick if he ~~kn~~ <sup>kn</sup> ~~w~~ <sup>w</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> 1 h. p.

that Linger-Longer had a boyfriend, and he replied with a genial glance across the table at her that he ~~is~~ not only <sup>e</sup> ~~kn~~ <sup>w</sup> ~~it~~ but he got a kick out of it. Hanni hadn't come in at this time, so he could talk freely.

Glennings said that this crisis was breaking up harmonious families everywhere: men were walking out on their wives. Dick nodded and said with a perfectly straight face that a woman he'd heard about at the office had said to her husband, "I forgot to put a pinch of bicarbonate in the rhubarb," and he'd interpreted her as saying, "We've got to dig a trench and fight it out in Rubath," and had walked out on her at once. There was also a member of the royal family who <sup>had</sup> ~~is~~ asked her private secretary what some ceremony would involve and was told, "Shaking hands all day and standing, <sup>a</sup> ~~m~~ <sup>m</sup>", which she heard as, "The sheikh intends to stay at

Sandringham," and a suite was prepared at once. Dick rattled all this out without any hesitation. <sup>It was easy to see how he would young girls round</sup> ~~preacher in Hyde Park, he added, and~~ <sup>L</sup> his little finger (Hanni's admiring expression). ~~started saying, "I know intimately, and in my youth it was even reduced by~~

~~the shaken voice, "It was going to say, to say that it was~~  
~~knocked down from the soap box at once, having taken minutes to say, "The~~  
~~sheikh and Creed."~~

couldn't go because he had his reputation to watch; if that want his 'whole cardboard fabric of self' would go, and it would be the end of the 'best little P.R.O. in the City.' Pinkie murmured with a pout, "I wouldn't dream of risking being run down by a police-horse, on my one quiet day in the week!"

→ Linger-Longer seemed never to be quite sitting in her chair even when she was, or to be quite in the conversation even when she was talking. But when she cried, "It's absolutely bloody disgraceful!" --- referring to the <sup>an atrocity</sup> ~~massacre~~ --- she was definite for a moment, quickened with this passion, that made even her eyes pointed and dark. Usually her gaze floated over objects, never touching them. Whereas Pinkie gazed rather steadily into the distance, Linger-Longer's gaze was always moving. She glanced at Granville for support and he nodded. He looked across the room at where the morning paper lay and saw the word again, MASSACRE. But he felt nothing. What had she derived from this word? What did she feel? He found himself staring at her, trying to find out. And he kept consulting himself for his own feeling, but there was none. There was also a picture in the paper showing a scuffle in the Rubath streets; but it evoked nothing in him; it showed a bundle lying in the roadway, someone dead or wounded, and the rest was a blur of smoke from tear-gas. Dick was quietly vehement, as if he could see the scene before him. Granville tried to imagine the scene and thus stimulate himself to feeling<sup>7</sup><sub>8</sub> but he couldn't! He felt inadequate, compared with the others. Perhaps the war had killed pity in him; this thought went through his head. It was in keeping with the 'orang-utang' image not to feel pity. He tapped himself continually, so to speak, for a change of emotion; but there was none. He was dead of feeling. He began to admire Linger-Longer compared

with himself: here was a girl who came to the house several times a week and sat about like a piece of furniture, more or less discounted, apparently without a thought in her head, and now she was making a far better show than he in the matter of conscience! It made the world feel safer, that there were people who could be stirred to kindness by a few words in a newspaper; it meant that if there was trouble consciences like theirs would come alive and put a stop to it! She even seemed to gather beauty into her face with her passion; the light, vague dignity in her eyes floated to rest. Hanni came in and was clearly bored by it all, and got herself some supper, moving round behind the others silently, edging past their chairs; he took confidence from her presence; the headlines appeared not to have changed her, either.

Glenning said that even if British troops had taken part it didn't mean anything: it wasn't 'official policy'; troops, he said, were always 'young boys', a fact we always lost sight of, and of course they wanted to hit back when they were hit and sometimes the politicians couldn't stop them. The others answered that the 'boys' oughtn't to be there at all; nobody was blaming them in any case; the official policy was wrong for having sent them there! Gerald was the only dissentient voice; from the beginning he'd been with the sheikh, or at least against Russian encroachments in the Middle East; he said it ought to be fought out now because it would have to be fought out anyway; the whole thing was a test of strength between our secret service and the Russian. But it transpired he didn't mean secret service so much as active political agents; he said it depended how much 'appeal' they had for people, what they promised them and so forth; and it was a question whether the Russians were promising them more, or whether the Arabs were more at home with us.

there be such a gulf between them? There were slow people and quick people, as there were fat and thin. But they were of one flesh! They were the same in their kidneys, their hearts and limbs: how could they be foreigners to each other in their feelings? Especially two people like him and Dick, from the same country, the same city? It was the same with 'intelligence', the word that had been ringing in his ears since the Sussex days, one of the cardinal middle-class virtues: who did he know who wasn't intelligent? Who of those sitting round the table, could he say was 'unintelligent'? Not one of them! They were all quick people; they understood everything that was put to them. Gerald and Glenning were 'honours men' from Oxford. Who did he know in the world who wasn't intelligent? He couldn't think of one for the moment; not even from the past! Everyone in Sussex had been intelligent, including the Major's wife! Walsh had been intelligent! Intelligence was a universal quality of the middle-class, it seemed; he couldn't think of one person, now or in the past, who lacked it! People like Abu Kath'm were intelligent in another way; one might call it intelligence of the heart; a little bit of education and they'd be the same as the others!

~~Where did people differ, then? Where did he differ from Dick?~~

→ <sup>In Granville's</sup> ~~One~~ could see a passion of steely mental obstinacy in Dick, as when he punished Hanni for violating one of his evenings-out: ~~three~~ evenings of loneliness for her at Hampton Court would effect the right degree of contrition, and so he'd stayed away for three evenings! This was his kind of will -- it worked through the mind; but for Granville this behaviour was impossible; he would have had a sense of betraying his past and his whole breathing organism, in deliberate self-mutilation; his will would have worked in a different way, towards trying to persuade



~~Hanni by words until she was filled with his conviction like a breath in her!~~

He remembered a strange incident <sup>nce</sup> at ~~training school~~ when Dick <sup>and</sup> had come almost running to him on a Saturday morning and said, "By God, ~~you~~ <sup>know</sup>, that Hanni is a marvellous girl! Do you know what she said to me this morning ~~when we were in bed together?~~ She said, 'If you ever did something I really hated I'd be capable of putting you out of my mind and never thinking of you again as long as I lived!' And <sup>he</sup> ~~she~~ added, "Don't you think that's terrific?" <sup>Pip</sup> ~~As on many other occasions Granville~~ <sup>just</sup> simply gaped at him. It didn't sound like Hanni at all, even from the little he knew of her. In those days ~~when she and Dick were getting to know each other~~, she hardly opened her mouth and sat rigid in her chair like a frightened child all the time, ~~her eyes wide with panic~~. She was so clearly trying to show herself worthy of <sup>Dick's</sup> ~~Dick's~~ world, where such <sup>Re Pip involved that Dick didn't see this.</sup> merciless statements were admired. There was ~~such~~ an odd artificiality of judgement in Dick, <sup>sometimes</sup> as if the mind had to work alone, unsupported by <sup>the means</sup> ~~the sound testimony of the heart~~. That incident was a good example: it showed Dick's will at work, producing a mental world which Hanni was frightened into joining.

*D. tal*

*was quietly turning into a careful business man*

~~Pinkie said that Dick's world was steadily changing his character and that~~ he went to the office every morning saying to himself, "I shall give this client five minutes, the other twenty," and that, except for the Brazilian client who took his shoes off 'to rest his feet' and then took Dick quietly through his album of nude photographs, he <sup>kept</sup> ~~conformed~~ to it.

~~And Granville had always been surprised at training school to see how well Dick ordered every day; with a little reading, a visit to town, a letter to Hanni, a crink and a brief chat in the bar, then bed to fall~~

*astounding precision*

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There was a <sup>great</sup> marvellous *castain/4P*

~~asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.~~ ~~Granville on the other hand had~~  
intactness in Dick that he envied.)

floated through the day as if time was a kind of raft and he shipwrecked  
on it, he tried to imitate Dick but it lasted half a day at most, after

which his mind relapsed into its humming state, as little personal as the  
wind through the trees. ~~Dick seemed to be in such good control of the~~  
flow of time, while <sup>Pip felt he</sup> ~~he was ashamed of himself for letting life roll by so~~

*And/Kew ng*

~~inconsequentially.~~ <sup>It was</sup> in the way Dick played darts in the ~~bar pub:~~  
~~sometimes~~ he watched the dart-board with ~~and~~ delicately glittering eyes  
for a moment, ~~and then~~ <sup>and</sup> his pale hand came slowly forward, curving slightly,  
~~over the level of his head,~~ <sup>then he</sup> ~~and~~ sent the dart in a soft but ~~direct~~

flight to the board. To darts and chess he brought a clean, methodical,  
softly devout concentration. He would sit over his chess-board with  
his elbows on his knees and his head bowed, quite still, and now and then  
~~he would~~ rub his chin with the tips of his fingers, moving them softly  
through the light hair of his beard, ~~without moving his eyes at all, in a~~

~~deep, interior concentration which, it seemed, no one could disturb.~~ One  
of Granville's first memories of him was in the library of the training-  
school sitting by the fire, writing a letter. Granville had just come  
in from a long walk, it being the week-end, and was still in his overcoat,  
his cheeks red and smarting from the wind outside. There was no one else  
in the room and he was just about to talk when the silence, seeming to  
emanate from Dick as he sat there with his legs crossed and his head bowed,  
drew him in and stopped his words. It also made him feel sheepish and  
redundant. Dick looked up very slowly, without surprise, and said in a  
light murmur, "Oh, hullo, bo'sun," and then went on writing at once. His  
eyes were steady, inclined with a genial expression on to the paper before

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him, and his lips were closed easily together, while he wrote without pause in a clear, effortless, scholar's hand, quite unaffected by Granville's arrival. Dick had made a full stop on the page and paused, looking up, and there had seemed a chance of speech; but after a few seconds he looked down again and began writing in the same way as before, in perfectly straight lines, again without pausing, and for Granville, at that moment,

→ in Dick a way as to make what he was doing seem the most desirable thing on earth, seemed to be exactly what Dick was doing.

the most desirable thing on earth, seemed to be exactly what Dick was doing. But at the same time Dick's harmony wasn't an inclusive thing;

it didn't

it didn't infect Granville with harmony as well, by a flow of spirit across the room; on the contrary, it made him feel redundant and useless, and also upon his dignity, since once having entered the room he had to make a show of having come in for a purpose, whereas his purpose had been to talk to Dick. He was inclined to believe now that this was a superb mental harmony in Dick, and perhaps a state into which Dick could induce himself at will; but it wasn't a total harmony of self which infected

other people by its presence; it wasn't the harmony of a comfortable man. As always it stirred Granville to admiration as a new kind of consciousness, not to a harmony of feelings, I raised peace, which made everything feel clean and safe, at least for the moment,

because it refused to fall the victim of hidden feelings, and seemed to be making life as it went along. Clear, sunny days always seemed specially so in Dick's presence; they suited his coolness; he was a visitor on the earth, choosing all the sights and sounds, strolling in the golden air; everything he touched, a book or a clean handkerchief, had this deft, vivid appearance as if it wasn't joined to reality but separated by his consciousness into an object called on to the earth by his own will.

This was clear in Dick's attitude to Creed. In his natural

Therefore Pip supposed it was a total harmony or all, but possible. He didn't want to take it to

the fact with Dick it was the opposite. The praise must be a peculiar tension, it was so clearly an act of exclusion. It achieved by a deliberate inward act: his mind even in repose, it was his whole self, his nervous system.



capacities he liked him; but rational principles made Creed his enemy and he was prepared to punish him in total detachment.

Ideas weren't the moving power of Dick's life, the cogs and levers of his progress. In Granville they were: thought moved slowly through him like a germ, in silence, changed his life --- this had happened in Sussex and it had just happened in Basrah --- there were continual revolutions in his life that came from thought. In Basrah germs of thought had started unawares, without him inviting them or trying to provoke them, and they continued naturally where his thoughts in Sussex had left off, as if there already lay in him an order; and the climax of this had been the night of the eclipse, which in turn had changed his life so that now he enjoyed a greater stillness than before and lived with fewer divisions of will; not that his life was more still in the outward aspect, not even that he could remember the details of his thought that night, but he was content to leave it like this until his next point of clarity came, confident that his life was moving and changing silently all the time in the light of that thought, through the chaos and all the bitter, jagged contradictions every day; he thought the night of the eclipse would bear fruit in him as action and living later on, and was moving in him like a germ now, being absorbed slowly, ~~turned over and transmuted through all the actions that seemed to him to~~ ~~have no connection with each other.~~

But Dick's <sup>thoughts</sup> ideas didn't have this life-giving and life-absorbing quality. They were leisurely. They fitted the tired hours after dinner, when there was <sup>occasin</sup> ~~time~~ for cleverness; <sup>often fascinating</sup> they were ~~penetrating and dissecting~~ little thoughts about the ambiguities of life, <sup>about</sup> sex, fears, pleasures.)

~~They came from sitting back a little from life.~~ They weren't thrown up

always entirely their own.

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~~haphazardly in the course of action, from underneath, they came from a~~  
quiet act of surveyance. <sup>But they required a</sup> ~~Life had to be safe and reasonably easy for~~ <sup>it.</sup>

~~them to be possible.~~ They seemed separate from the real world that  
flowed along outside, <sup>from</sup> its tumbling events <sup>that seemed</sup> too hot for reflection. They  
couldn't be had by someone in distress, or <sup>with the slightest</sup> ~~suffering in any way.~~ <sup>passion of mind.</sup> They <sup>were the</sup>

~~won scholarships, impressed teachers at school, belonged to formal and~~  
~~stylish behaviour. They were philosophical in the weak, mental sense~~  
~~of theorising. And they produced, if successful, an answer that was like~~  
~~'solid' in the English sense,~~ <sup>without passion.</sup>

~~Granville~~ <sup>Pup</sup> found that compared with Dick he couldn't properly form clear  
judgements about other people. He could only see the actions: he couldn't  
make a formal judgement of another person's whole character ~~in a~~

~~satisfactory way.~~ If Dick asked him what he thought <sup>of</sup> ~~about~~ someone, say  
~~someone they'd met at the office, he stumbled and said, "Oh, I don't know!"~~

~~He ---~~ ~~And there he would stop.~~ Or he would say perfunctorily, "Oh,  
he seems all right", <sup>when in fact he didn't feel happy about the person</sup>  
at all; only the fact wasn't clear to him. But Dick would give a succinct

appraisal of the man, which <sup>usually</sup> ~~always~~ appeared to <sup>Pup</sup> ~~Granville~~ exactly right,  
so that he wondered at Dick's ~~power of penetration,~~ and his imperviousness  
to false charms. ~~Granville would ask himself why he hadn't been brave~~

~~enough to venture such a clear criticism, to say exactly what he thought~~  
of the man, and he resolved to do so next time when the occasion arose.

But when the next occasion did arise the same thing happened; he hesitated  
and murmured something like, "Oh, he's a nice enough person!" Sometimes

he would say, "He gives me a nasty feeling." But he couldn't give a  
real appraisal. All he could say was what the other person made him  
feel like; he couldn't venture to say what the other person was. He

They talked on about nothing in particular, as if his arrival had been a year ago, and she got him another drink. It got dark and the lights were visible from the street below, rather silver, like moonlight. Then to his relief the guests began leaving downstairs. The cars outside started up, making an unholy roar in the narrow street. And Hanni rose, having unconsciously performed her role of nurse.

"I'll go and collect Dick," she murmured. And as she went to the door she added, "Come over and see us one day."

"We'd love to!"

After a time he heard the front door close. There, everything was all right after all!

CHAPTER 2.

But now they were alone together he couldn't bear to face her. That was the pattern between them. He sat on in the attic room in the darkness—Hanni switched off the light by accident when she went. He heard Pinkie clearing up downstairs. Why didn't she come up to say hullo? Surely it meant something? But why didn't he go downstairs to her? He could go downstairs now and chuck her under the chin and have another drink, make a joke of it. It was what he actually wanted to do, with all his heart. But he couldn't!

Later there would be a quarrel; a sudden rash word followed by tears. He would then pour everything out in a long speech, going into the whys and wherefores of her errors and sometimes, though more rarely, the whys and wherefores of his own, while he strode up and down the room gesticulating, a glare splitting his brow, his shoulders hunched up like someone trying to force his way into a tunnel. The theme would be moral: what their lives ought to be like together. Meanwhile her eyes would begin to flicker and she would stifle a yawn. She would begin to feel imprisoned in a torrent of words, suffocated, drowning. Once launched on a theme he was beyond

It occurred to him that he hadn't touched Pinkie yet. This meant he hadn't touched her for a month. Wasn't that strange? Well, they were completely out of tune with each other, really. Their sex was fumbled, on the whole, glorified self-abuse. His desire was too direct for her: she wanted subtle and intricate approaches; even cruelty would have thrilled her more. She closed her eyes and got excited only when his touch seemed anonymous to her; when she could forget him as he really was. And he, wrecking his chances, obtruded himself, gazing at her and talking. The dim and shadowy excited her; but he was frightened!

But once—at Stratford on Avon—he could remember with fascination. They'd gone up to see 'The Tempest' and stayed the night at a small, cosy inn near the river. The spirit of the room was favourable to them, perhaps, with its bright curtains and tiny mullioned windows; it might have been the previous occupants—a lingering scent of good lust. Anyway, it was the first time they really abandoned themselves to each other; her breasts glistened with his kisses in the darkness, her nipples protruded,

never really got down to anything, but afterwards he felt the loss of his company.

Quite suddenly, in the grounds of Hampton Court one afternoon, after they and the Pollockes had eaten together, he turned to Pinkie

CHAPTER 7.

One Saturday Granville woke up slowly and realised she wasn't there. At first, as he roused himself, he had the usual drugged sense of being melted in with her, without touch or real physical sensation of any kind, then he began to realise that his arm was lying on the bed itself, not on her hip. He moved it, to discover whether it was an illusion. She was gone. He was aware that the phone-bell had rung. She had got out of bed hurriedly to answer it; he didn't remember her getting out as a real event but as something that had taken place inside his own body, a change of feeling. He felt mortally

BOOK 11.CHAPTER 8.

People started calling at the house again. Glenning, the publicity-man, was almost a daily visitor. Some of the other faces he'd seen that first evening reappeared; there was a girl Dick Pollocke had been talking to; her name was Lucy, and she always came with a girlfriend nicknamed Ginger. The two of them sat in the music-room together, long-haired and quiet, sometimes with a book, sometimes just sitting.

For some time there were repeated phone-calls in the day which came to nothing when he answered them. He would pick up the receiver and say hullo, then there would be silence, followed by a click at the other end. It got on his nerves and the idea became fixed in his mind that it was Grove trying to get through to Pinkie, though why Grove didn't know she worked at Wembley he couldn't explain. One day he shouted into the <sup>silent</sup> phone, trembling, "Stop it, you bloody fool, stop it!" He remembered afterwards how his voice had echoed up the well of the stairs in the empty house, like someone else's voice, rasping and strange; it sounded like someone bound and gagged.

CHAPTER 13.

This inspection of his office was unusual. He was frightened. Did it happen because he was on leave? He asked Dick and he didn't know.

It seemed funny that Tomlinson, from the Beirut office, should be allowed to do the inspecting. Perhaps they were thinking of sending him to Basrah as an exchange with Granville. He had met Tomlinson once or twice and he seemed strikingly capable, tall, spectacled, rather brisk and sharp. Also he had an Arab wife, from Cairo—not a Christian Arab, either; it helped matters with some of the sheikhs.

He thought of writing to Mohammed about it and asking what Tomlinson had said. What files had he looked at? Did he have the proper authority? But it occurred to him that he didn't need the authority, since the Beirut office looked after the whole of the Middle East and it was only Tomlinson's kindness and tact that had allowed him to assume otherwise. He was troubled. Perhaps they knew—at the London office—

consciousness of its effect on others---its importance as a counter in public relations.

As he walked away from the phone he felt clean and disburdened, and thoughts were no longer crossing and fighting in his head. Once his mother had told him that Pinkie reminded her of his own aunt May, the same lavish, golden style, the slapdash generosity. There was something in their voices too that was similar---not the tone exactly but a richness that couldn't be described, as if it came from past generations, like a song that has an inexplicably ancient ring; they had singsong voices, floating up and down, far beyond people.

'I thank God you do not come back. It is too safe.' He meant 'unsafe'; this was a peculiar error he always made, omitting negative prefixes. 'My dear,' he ended, 'I think I spend one month on one outsider this afternoon. I have one good tip!' He always measured money by his monthly wage, calling thirty pounds 'one month', sixty pounds 'two month' and so forth.

In nearly all the kitchen-discussions England was in the wrong. And he took this for granted---it did seem natural that England should always be in the wrong. 'England' meant different things at different times---sometimes it meant bad weather, at others wartime restrictions which were still lingering on, sometimes bad colonial policies, at others stiffness of character. It need have no connection with the realities at all: it was a static descriptive term, pejorative, automatically so, that covered a certain mood you were in, 'England'---which everybody would understand. He was so used to it that when Linger-Longer and Ginger talked like this in the crisis he found it quite natural. But what was going to happen if England was frittered away like this all the time? What would happen to their little group on the kitchen, and the language they talked: weren't both English? how much could England bear, in her

"It looks as if you won't ever be going back to Basrah," Pinkie said to him.

He noticed she said 'you' again, not 'we'. "Oh, I don't know," he replied. "It'll probably blow over!"

Pinkie asked Dick if he knew that Linger-Longer had a boyfriend, and he replied with a genial glance across the table at her that he not only knew but he got a kick out of it. Hanni hadn't come in at this time, so he could talk freely. Glenning said that this crisis was breaking up harmonious families everywhere: men were walking out on their wives. Dick nodded and said with a perfectly straight face that a woman he'd heard about at the office had said to her husband, "I forgot to put a pinch of bicarbonate in the rhubarb," and he'd interpreted her as saying, "We've got todig a trench and fight it out in Rubath", and had walked out on her at once. There was also a royal personage who asked her private secretary what some ceremony that day would involve and was told, "Shaing hands all day and standing, ma'm," which she heard as, "The sheikh intends to stay at Sandringham," and a suite was prepared at once. Dick rattled all this out without any hesitation. It was easy to see how he wound young girls round his little finger (Hanni's artful expression).

Linger-Longer seemed never to be quite sitting in her chair even when she was, or to be quite in the conversation even when she was talking. But when she cried, "It's absolutely bloody disgraceful!"—referring to some atrocity—she was definite for a moment, quickened with this passion, that made even her eyes pointed and dark. She was an unusual girl to have in the group: not unusual in herself, but she had beliefs, she worried about things beyond her immediate comfort. She was too definite for the group, and Pip told himself she wouldn't

last long. Dick was only interested in her bosom, which she sometimes glanced down at with a sort of concentrated intellectual fire, as if it challenged her and got the better of her. He helped it get the better of her, and 'sort of melted it all in with the crisis', he told Pip. Usually her gaze floated over objects, never touching them. The passion ---the mental passion---brought beauty into her face for a moment: the light, vague dignity in her eyes floated to rest as she said something indignant, her chin pushed forward. Hanni came in and was clearly bored by it all, and got herself supper, moving round behind the others silently, edging past their chairs. She professed sympathy with the Arabs, so as keep in competition with Linger-Longer, but it went against the grain, you could see that.

The passion in Dick was different. It was a sort of steely mental obstinacy. It came out when he argued quietly, or punished Hanni for 'violating' one of his evenings-out. Pip remembered an incident once: Dick came almost running to him and said, "By God, that Hanni is a marvellous girl! Do you know what she said to me this morning in bed? She said, 'If you ever did something I really hated I'd be capable of putting you out of my mind and never thinking of you again as long as you lived!'" And he added, "Don't you think that's terrific?" Pip just gaped at him. It didn't sound like Hanni at all, even from the little he knew of her. In those days she hardly opened her mouth and sat rigid in her chair like a frightened child all the time. She was so clearly trying to show herself worthy of Dick's world, where such merciless statements were admired (decoratively brutal attitudes cut a figure at the public school and Dick was still, almost entirely, a schoolboy, as if he would never live beyond those days among the 'toffee-nosed little imitation men' as Glenning called public schoolboys). Pip wondered that Dick didn't

see this. There was an odd artificiality of judgement in Dick; another effect of the public school perhaps, as if he would never get to terms with the real world even if he did with a certain sort of closed English one. It was seemed that his mind had to work alone, unsupported by other organs. That incident was a good example: it showed Dick's will at work, producing a mental world which Hanni was frightened into joining. She didn't realise it was only a schoolboy's game, and had no experience of life behind it, only a habit of snubbing which the public school taught as a sign of character. She would have done all right to join that world fifty years before: what she didn't know (as an immigrant) was that it was crumbling fast, in fact so precipitously that the whole country would be brought to its knees as a result, in a few years. At least, that was what Glenning predicted, in his deft, lazy way: he was an immigrant himself (white South Africa). When Dick was promoted to the head of his department he said (to Dick), 'The higher they climb the better we see their arses'. Dick's eyes fluttered genially at him and he asked, "Who's they?" "The public schoolboy", said Glenning, with his stolid Boer gaze lightened with the English mildness.

Pinkie said that Dick was quietly turning into a careful business man (fashion was against 'the business man' these days). He went to the office every morning saying to himself, 'I shall give this client five minutes, the other twenty', and she said that except for the Brazilian client who took his shoes off 'to rest his feet' and then took Dick slowly through his album of nude photographs he kept to it with astonishing accuracy.

What Pip admired in Dick was a certain intactness he had: he seemed to be in such good control of the flow of time, while Pip felt

floated through the day as if time was a kind of raft and he shipwrecked on it. To his dart games and chess games Dick brought a clean, methodical, softly devout concentration. He would sit over his chess-board with his elbows on his knees and his head bowed, quite still, and now and then rub his chin with the tips of his fingers, moving them softly through the light hair of his beard, in such a way as to make what he was doing seem the most desirable thing on earth at that moment. At the same time his harmony wasn't an inclusive thing: it didn't infect other people. It was for himself alone, so it wasn't harmony or real peace at all, but a state of repose in his mind. In fact it seemed to induce tension in others. It was almost an act of exclusion. Perhaps it was only a variant in the art of snubbing, taught him at school: even the repose was a demonstration of character.

Dick's thoughts fitted the tired hours after dinner, when there was an occasion for cleverness: they were fascinating little thoughts about sex, fears, pleasures; their appeal lay in their candour. But they seemed to need (or to come from) a safe and reasonably easy life. They seemed separate from the real world. They couldn't be shared by someone in distress— They were the sort that won scholarships and good degrees in England: they were 'solid' in the English (or rather the public-school sense), that is without passion.

You could see it in Dick's handwriting—method, clarity, repose. And a touch of the decorative, what Pip called the 'dandy'. He was exactly the kind to make a business man, but one without driving, much less new, ideas. He would fulfil a function, with method and repose. He was one of what Glenning called 'England's little army of public school adjutants' who were all right if you had generals for them to serve: but England no longer did.

Only Dick's fears—his fear of madness—his sudden frightened relapses into disorder (Hanni had to close the flat to visitors)—brought him into company like Pip's and Pinkie's. When he had an important interview he put on a suit in the drabest conventional taste, and cropped his hair like a schoolboy: that was how he saw authority, as basically respectable. Pip and Pinkie didn't make that mistake. Dick ran to the respectable and ordered world (he assumed it to be that) to recover from the bouts of near-madness. He sometimes talked to Pip about these. Yet he seemed no different from any of his close friends (all old schoolfriends): they all seemed to have something wrong with them, in Pip's eyes. They created an artificial little world among themselves, just like the hard, toffee-nosed little men Glenning described. Their wit was schoolboy wit, which was no wit at all for the grown world. They helped to scratch each other's backs, in their various jobs. But it wouldn't last long, unsupported by power, with the empire ('the adjutant's paradise', Glenning said) gone. When a few of them came to the house and sat round Dick talking with their strange held-in, condescending accents they seemed not mad to the others but just damned silly, a little bad perhaps but not mad. Their world hadn't even that degree of grandness.

When Dick had to choose a subordinate he always went for someone mediocre, whom he called 'safe'. Lively and daring people roused his admiration: and secretly his resentment.

Pip bought a bottle of good wine and asked Dick round: he hoped for more news of the Marquis. Hanni dropped in later and an argument developed between her and Dick. First she looked at the wine-bottle and seeing the chateau-label murmured, "What a mean bastard you are, Dick! I thought you said we'd got to cut down on spending?" She lifted the bottle up

CHAPTER 18.

He had got into the habit of reading the morning paper over breakfast more or less column by column. It was an hypnotic activity he had never known before. He always turned to the middle pages first, where the gossip column was. It gave him the sense of an inner circle of glittering London activity from which he was cut off and which was going on all the time, spreading a glow over his small life. This circle involved more or less the same people day by day, but it wasn't 'society' in the fashionable sense. It was a special gossip-column society and though it might be imaginary it was acceptable in the breakfast hour, in a half-dream; a little sickly and squalid, but compulsive. And it was a relief from the dry, tyrannical hold of the other pages, where robberies, dirty civic crimes, yacht races and political manoeuvres were dealt with in a few quick phrases which tried to show no heart or the slightest serious concern.

The gossip column was like a letter someone had

'Joe Clockwork' was the nickname of a smooth social climber Hanni was getting to know. He told Hanni that the only reason he didn't 'flee the Chaworth Road house' after his first five minutes there was knowing that Pinkie was an Aldercote. His name sometimes figured, weakly, in the gossip column. He also said that Granville's 'hotness of manner' horrified him. But Pip didn't know this.

quiet cohesion of the body, by virtue of its withdrawal from the world; Pip had never seen him in repose before, not quite like this. He only remembered him smiling and shaking hands, gazing at everyone with eyes that seemed incapable of sharpness. And now Aldercote had an effect on the trees round him: he made them seem part of a magnificent park closed to the public. Pip thought of the gardens of Versailles. Partly it was Aldercote's corduroy jacket, which at first sight looked velvet.

There was something so foreign to him in Aldercote, he himself had been away so long and in such a different world, that he felt a fascinated curiosity towards him. It was like being drawn into a strange, vivid country where he only had to watch and listen; he was no longer involved; what 'aunt' Beatrice or Deryk thought of him didn't matter now; they had no power to hurt. A glow had come into his own life which he held intact; he had tasted friendship; he deliberately remembered Mohammed as he walked along, as a protective device. He clung to the memory of Basrah! He felt nervous apprehension threaten to mount in him for a moment, like a devil inside that challenged whether this new strength was genuine or not. But it died.

He was aware that this new strength ~~he had~~ might be his first glimpse of maturity; it had something to do with the defeat of pride in himself; he would have to learn how not to care what people thought of him; then he would be able to rest, and watch and listen; he would allow his own self to reside elsewhere, intact; and that would take much construction—perhaps years more.

The carriage of Deryk's head as he passed was like a sea-horse's, uplifted, his eyes half closed in a sleepy, pale surveillance, his nose long and pale, seeming to overhang his lips. Pip could remember when

Deryk opened the door to him, a few weeks after he and Pinkie were married; he remembered the sense of being incorporated into some grand and blazing activity, which never came about however; it was in Deryk's delighted smile as he stretched out his hand—to his 'favourite' cousin's husband—with, "How very nice to meet you! Do come in!"

That promise of grandness lay in Deryk's accent, which was like a painstaking effort not to speak the language of ordinary men—it said 'rarely' for 'really' and 'daw' for 'do'. It seemed to say, 'I was paid for.' It was 'trade aping nobility', as Pinkie said. It was deliberately Top Drawer. Aunt Beatrice was nouveau riche, she had aimed herself at the Aldercote family like a cannon. That was where her vigour and flamboyance and sexiness came from; she didn't bring money into the family but terrific moral force.

The memories became more and more detailed—a slight rudeness here, a sudden harsh sneering sentence from 'aunt' Beatrice, a look of horror on her bright face when he mentioned his own mother casually in a conversation—the horror made her face fall into her chin!

Absurd, dead, historical, but here these memories were coming up like steam from Deryk's parting figure. He remembered that old illusive sense of being subtly favoured by Deryk—that was the web he and Beatrice weaved on their visitors, the <sup>invisible</sup> costly/article they were trying to sell to a world that had no ~~market~~ market for it.

Behind them was the inner citadel of power, and they held the keys—that was the idea you were supposed to get. But you were never let in. So the dream was always to hover before you. Deryk's whole body seemed made for courtesy. But it didn't go all the way through. You were left with the feeling that he and Beatrice would tear you to

pieces as soon as your back was turned. You left them feeling an inexplicable anger.

He remembered their house—the hushed anteroom of the citadel of power—the thick carpets, the white curving bannisters, the dim and heavily curtained drawing room that offered its bogus promise of civilisation; there was the great porcelain bowl from Aldercote shining from one of the tables, the deep armchairs into which you sank, and striped chintz everywhere. Beatrice rose from an armchair as you came in with a mighty rustle and sweep, like centuries of power. She was robust, too much for her role, with thick arms and a determined chin. Her eyes sparkled at you, gleeful and challenging, black, with a tiny light of irony in them. Her dress was cut low, and the lights were arranged to take twenty years off her age, which they did, giving her skin a marvellous, soft, healthy glow, with nothing pinched or thwarted. She spent so much time arranging how to take years off her life that people thought her much older than she was, always. When she tried to take ten off they put twenty on mentally.

She loved rank ravenously, with an almost innocent passion. Knowing that somebody was a lord or higher (lower she didn't go) made them beautiful to her, she really did look at them with sexually admiring eyes. When she was with Pinkie's uncle, Maimbury, she laughed and threw back her head and flashed him glances, and dim lights were <sup>un</sup> necessary then, her skin vibrated naturally with youth. By the same token she hated the absence of rank in people. More than that, she couldn't forgive it. She liked Granville but simply couldn't forgive him.

CHAPTER 21.

It had started by accident, just before the eclipse, when he and Pinkie wandered out on the porch and found Abu Kath'm his houseboy's mother there. She had a round, flat face with eyes set wide ypart, her mouth a thick, straight, yellowish-crimson line. A hem of her black abba was usually drawn up over her nose, so that her eyes shone blackly in the slit. She stood hardly higher than his elbow and walked in a round, fussy way, going softly forward on her toes, hardly disturbing the sand, her long skirt making a brief circular motion backwards and forwards.

The newspapers had been talking for days about the coming eclipse. And the time of total obsurcation was predicted to the minute. It was to be a few minutes after three in the afternoon.

Outside a wind stirred the sand, like before a dust storm. The city lay in a great hush. Only this slight breeze touched the sand on the pathway outside and sent it whirling up in thin yellow clouds among thepalm leaves. Usually they could hear children playing near by, or cars in the distance. But today there wasn't a sound.

The sun shone more and more dimly, as if a high mist obscured it. There was something vaguely disturbing in the air. Perhaps it was only the silence. The palm leaves were still like iron, the colours of the garden became more and more lurid as all brightness left the sky. Everything seemed to be waiting. The sandy undulations of the waste area outside looked hard like flint, each mound getting more and more fixed, a polished yellow crust. The rugged barks of the banana trees, the parched grass and yellow mud-hut with the endless shimmering desert

beyond, grew more contrasted as if, though more distinct from each other than before, they were now part of the same hard substance, in a new, unwholesome intimacy. There was no wind now, not even a breeze.

He heard Abu Kath'm say the greeting Allah bil khair to them under her cloth. He nodded to her. She moved nearer them with her soft, circular motion. He noticed that her eyes were troubled, blacker than usual, more fiery and pointed. She was saying something about the sun—"Allah is angry with men". And, "He is covering his sight from men, in shame for them!" She repeated the quick, stabbing word for 'shame', that was like a whip of punishment itself—aib, two syllables rushed breathlessly together.

And he suddenly realised something as he looked at her. She was actually part of the weather, as he wasn't. You could actually see the weather change in her face: as it got lighter, as the sun returned drowsily and hazily back to its old life, so the light came into her face, changing and softening the lines and clearing her eyes. It made him feel that the eclipse was a whole movement for her, inside her—not just physical, outside. It was even moral—God was angry. It was a feeling of disgust, fear, stillness: all that you could read in her face. The sickness of the weather was hers for a moment.

But he and Pinkie saw everything at a distance from themselves: that was how they perceived things, quite naturally. They saw the eclipse like a physicist's survey, though they knew no physics: it had been imprinted on them—the eclipse was the movement of the moon between the earth and the sun, three great balls in space, and that was that, like the motion of a machine.

He realised for the first time that his way of perceiving things was not the only way there was, but had grown out of centuries of  
though

thought, and special Christian thought at that—quite different from Arab thought, or Chinese, or Indian. It was really a great step in his life, this tiny revelation.

And because he realised it he knew he would never quite think like that again. He would never again quite see the universe as he had been taught to see it at school—mathematically, like a machine. From that moment he no longer quite felt apart from life, as he always had before. He was no longer at a distance from it, watching.

That night the breeze made a hushed sound outside, touching his bedroom window, and he glanced up. He could see the endless desert outside the city, framed in the window like dust. It was all unsubstantial like dust, a vast shadow, not only the dark desert that seemed to billow and shift as he watched it but the room itself and its furniture and he himself as he lay in bed. He had the feeling of actually breathing the night, the source of his breath being the stillness outside. And he felt inside life, really inside, safely and permanently, for the first time: no longer just a man visiting a kind of inanimate space-time dome that bordered on oblivion. It was like being received back into the arms of someone essential to him, whose existence he hadn't heard of before. He was alive: not in himself alone, as a single unit of manhood, but inside the whole breathing world, which shared its identity with him. He was no longer foreign to the world, no longer suspiciously at variance with its animals, its awful stars that twinkled from so far away, its destructive seas and parching, subtly inviting deserts. Thus at the same time a terrific fear—which he remembered from the endless backstreets of his childhood—a kind of godless fear, a fear of the smoky grey oblivion that hung over the rooftops and had no messages for you,

except about your destiny to end in an unthinkable black box one day—lifted from him. And in that (a strange thought that came to him) half of the negative spirit of England lifted too, and let the other England in, that dreamed between two seas. He was suddenly freed of the dull, disbelieving eyes that had stared into his. It was like suddenly hearing church-bells across that same parched desert outside, when you had given up hope. When you thought that only you in your flesh existed.

His education had given him no inkling of all this. It had put a certain design on the real world, that was all: it had taught him to believe in a dead universe. It had promised to teach him facts— in biology it was the rabbit, but the rabbit dead; in history people but the people dead; in physics the sky but the sky dead. He realised that the spell of life had been missed out, like a tale without the narrative or even the narrator, only the dead synopsis purporting to be the truth. It was life seen in withdrawal, without sympathy, as if we were not participators, as if we didn't share the life. So it wasn't the truth at all. Yet it had got inside us all, as our way of seeing things, without question.

So he had come alive, really for the first time. He began to see that the world he knew through himself alone wasn't necessarily false, nor private like a dream. That was his discovery on the night of the eclipse, which never really left him again. That was changed him once and for all, which he dared not put into words but nursed jealously inside him: which made him able to bear—now—so much trembling.

CHAPTER 22.

Pinkie phoned from Meedham to say he should come up for a couple of days. So he did. It was a lovely house, set back from the road, its porch shaded by a dark plane-tree. The red-brick walls glowed in the last of the sun. There were tall windows, their sills within a foot or two of the ground, so you could step into the rooms from the gravel drive.

Elizabeth made rather a fuss of him and Pinkie played up to it. It seemed to give her a thrill as well. She made the tea, and they drank out of tall nursery mugs. She behaved as if she'd always given him tea in this homely way; for the ~~first~~ <sup>being,</sup> time she seemed to believe it really was so.

Elizabeth showed him her husband's study: it led off the dark hall, long and quiet, with panelled walls and deep leather armchairs. ~~Pinkie~~ He told Pinkie what a wash-out it made him feel, being a clerk, when he saw all this.

She murmured uncomfortably, perhaps under the influence of the mellow house, "You don't have such a bad life. Anyway, you've got style and that's what counts." And after another pause: "And you're not a clerk now, you're a branch manager!"

"That sounds worse," he said with a laugh.

That evening they talked about the value of confession. Elizabeth was a Catholic—she said, "It's such a jolly good service. It's like going to the lavatory!"

"Why, do you have many sins?" Pinkie asked her with a smile.

"Oh, lots

"Oh, lots! Not grave ones—but lots of tiny ones!"

"I have lots too," said Pinkie quite seriously. "And grave ones."

"Why?" he said, "what's so grave about them?" He had just remembered his outing to the zoo with the hair-girl and felt absurdly jubilant about it: he, too, had a sin—a potential one anyway! And this went to excuse Pinkie's.

She seemed to catch the roguishness in his tone and said, "What about yours?" It was a little tournament of words, and Elizabeth was looking on like a child, though she was maturer than either of them.

"Mine," he said, "my sins," leaning back and gazing up at the ceiling, a glass in his hand, its ice clinking against the sides, "oh, they're like shadows, they come and go..."

"How?" Pinkie asked, her chin quivering a little this time—in case he got serious.

"Well, I never know what's going to turn out a sin—something said—something thought—rarely anything done."

"No, I was talking about ordinary sins."

"Sleeping with people, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Oh, well, they're not so big as they seem!" And he could have kicked himself for saying it, because a look not of relief exactly but half-excited determination flashed into her eyes, making them glint for a moment, while the relief was in her mouth, in a certain sweet repose that settled there for a few seconds. And yet, why not...? Why not give away your life with an easy gesture as with any other?

"I haven't time to be unfaithful," Elizabeth said.

"You're like the people who say that've got no time for reading," Pinkie cried. "Just not interested."

"When I'm forty and the children are grown up," Elizabeth said

in a demure way, blinking, "I may cast my net around."

"Oh, well, if you say a few Hail Maries afterwards, I expect that'll be all right."

They went up to bed early. It was a wide, low-ceilinged room with an immense bed, and one of the windows looked straight down a wide valley.

The next day he went for a walk alone. The road dipped between elms, shaded. He could smell newly cut grass. He remembered certain scenes from the past—they swept into his mind suddenly, the names and places forgotten: tea in a garden with tall grass near by, hyacinths like a blue cloud in a wood, a voice across the fields. And with them came a sense of miserable regret, like darkness suddenly falling, as if he'd lost something of stupendous importance somewhere along the path and couldn't say where. There——! It was on the tip of his tongue. He'd nearly got it: the key! But it didn't come.

That evening went well. Lots of people came. Pinkie put down a neat gin and said in a loud voice that she felt 'a world better for it', and strode across to get another. In this sort of mood she infected Pip; he, too, talked loudly.

At dinner he heard Elizabeth say something about 'while manners maketh man it only maketh an ordinary man, whereas a gentleman maketh manners.' He gazed/round the table---they were dramatic and full, flushed in the last evening light. They seemed to have the whole English past in them, not just project their own feelings. They were redder and wilder than faces in London. The past was dug into their flesh. They were local land agents, a 'squire' or two, a farmer. Their social authority was dead but it still showed in their

Next day he took the report to be typed out by the Secret Weapon. On his way out of the office he met Hanni who to his astonishment said, "Well, how do you like the girls at the Marquis?"

"What girls?" His mouth fell open.

Joy Celeste's hair-dance was the triumph of the evening and there was a lot of clapping. She had painted her skin a light yellow and held in her lips to avoid the 'nigger-look'. The chorus bumped into each other and danced horribly, but the audience loved it. The hair-girl seemed to impress Pinkie in a dark way. But at the end of the dance, during the wild clapping (in the programme the hair-girl was called 'Makboula straight from Tetuan'), she qualified the awe by saying loudly to Dick, "She'd be more attractive if she had a square meal, wouldn't she?"

The posters advertised 'real Arab dance and dervishes', which meant that nearly every number was a chaos. If a dance began slowly it had to go up to a deafening crescendo. It was a tiny stage, making it difficult for all the chorus to get around. A hushed, "Get off my fuckin' toes!" sounded across the stage.

Only the hair-girl was remarkable. There was a real ferocity in her dance; it seemed her head might go flying off. She came out to the bar afterwards in a hard mood and talked at the top of her voice, looking small and shrivelled, with pale cheeks, her high cheek-bones sticking out; she had a short girlish frock on which made her look a hard fourteen.

Pinkie's cousin Deryk Aldercote was also there, most polite, bobbing up and down as he took Pinkie's hand, and singing out, "Hullo!", his shoulders hunched a little, in a little dance of charm. And, "How nice to see you again, Pip!" he cried. Then he was lost in the crowd, with his pale nose.

Suddenly Joe Clockwork, talking to Nanni in a whisper, lifted his head and made a high-pitched laugh, like a brief scream, which made everybody turn round. Pinkie said this was his 'social speciality'. He did it to mark himself out from other people, but he never did it

more than a set number of times; for a short appearance at a cocktail party he did it once, with perhaps a parting one at the door; for a long party there would be five or six, louder as people drank more; at a dinner-party he kept it for the dessert. It was meant to show everybody that something very special was going on in his corner of the room.

Dick went on talking to the pale girl behind a potted plant, leaning towards her, seeming to elect her the only person in the room; his eyes were clear and twinkling; he treated every one else casually, as if the evening had only one purpose for him.

Elizabeth looked superb, her hair done up in a kind of mantilla, with long ear-rings; she wore a long black gown and had made no effort at fancy dress apart from a flimsy horse-hair tail, also black, that hung from a lace bow at the back. Pip whirled her round the floor at a breathless speed. The band looked down from their tiers in a gingerly way, not showing the slightest amusement and seeming to go higher and higher as the evening went on.

Pinkie said that Clockwork's set regarded fancy dress as an 'uncool' thing to do; they wore dinner jackets and their expressions were tired and casual, as if (but only as if) from repletion of the senses; she said that 'pallor' was 'the thing' now—you couldn't even sunbathe when you found yourself in the south of France; you had to look 'fainting'. Hell was more or less in this set but she danced too much; if she could just sit and 'sort of wilt' at a card table for four or five hours in the evening she would qualify. Hanni's brilliant zebra costume stood out in the dark card room like a precious carpet; Pinkie said that this was quite all right because Hanni, being 'exotic', could do nothing 'uncool', she was almost pure decoration.

considering a pay-claim, and left the money on his desk before she went out in the morning.

CHAPTER 27.

The river-party Elizabeth had written about (on piss-soaked notepaper) was a great success. There were some faces from the Tail-and-Hoof ball. She introduced them to a bouncy young man who talked very fast and tapped his foot restlessly, and sang snatches of old hit-tunes. "Do you know this one?" he would say like a machine-gun; and launch into the deathly idiotic words of a 'hit'. To Pip's surprise Pinkie lapped all this up. Normally she chucked to herself at this kind of thing and said something genially cutting.

The river was touched with red from the sun. At the Isle of Dogs they turned round, the boat kicking up a wash with its paddles, and the bouncy young man kept up his endless chit-chat, taking his audience for granted. Pinkie and Elizabeth seemed rapt, glued to him; they never missed a syllable or breath. Pip couldn't make it out. The powerful Elizabeth was suddenly so docile and girlish. She ducked her head diffidently and kept saying to Pinkie, "Isn't he extraordinary?", after a completely flat remark he might have made, such as, "I tend to go for the quick tunes, I don't know about you." His other remarks were a string of references to odd things like aircraft, houses in the country, card games, turf for lawns—all in a jumble which Liz and Pinkie seemed to see a perfect logic in. Then there was the story of how he had hitchhiked fifty miles across Norway because his car had broken down; also he had stayed at a hotel where the food was good, and another one where the food was bad; sometimes it had rained, sometimes it hadn't. And at everything Liz and Pinkie showed enthralled

wonder. Pip tried to listen harder—to get a narrative thread he might have missed—and he tried to join in, laughing and showing surprise by lifting his eyebrows. Hegore—that was his name—said he'd been on the 'grand tour' the previous year: he pronounced it the French way and Pip thought this was a joke and roared with laughter, but he tripped up badly there because it was serious. And George had once played baccarat with a lorry-driver in a bistro at dawn—an apparently serious remark which got howls of laughter from the women. Then, from George, "I was absolutely whacked the next night, I really was—God, I think I slept about twelve hours—!" To which Pinkie said in a demure way—it was so unusual for her that Pip's mouth fell open—"Come, wome, I can't imagine you getting tired!" Why not? She hadn't met the chap before.

They all went on to the Melbourne afterwards. And there was more champagne. Pinkie and George danced together—she showed him how to whirl round on the same spot without getting giddy; you kept your eyes on the other person's eyes! And she gave him such an oh-you-charming-devil look that Pip nearly fell off his seat. It was a role he simply couldn't connect her with in any way, it was just too astonishing for words. He couldn't imagine how a person you had lived with for four or five years could show a totally new side, unwarned and unrehearsed in the smallest hint beforehand. Geogre wasn't a 'faun' after all. He didn't even have what she called 'umph'. Grove had 'umph', but not George. George was pleasant, inconsequential, cheerful—not the sort of person who interested her

He said nothing about the interview to Pinkie. It seemed she'd forgotten he was to have it. A few days later when his boat ticket arrived she murmured vaguely, "I suppose I'll be joining you in a few months, won't I?" He nodded glumly and they said no more. Grove came over again. He was once more struck by his friendly confidence, and felt revived; the events of the last few weeks, including the question of the child, seemed unimportant. A party gathered in the music-room that evening. Grove talked most of the time, making everyone laugh. While he talked, rattling away without the slightest embarrassment, Pip asked himself, why should he leave? why not be a subordinate here, if he was to be one anyway? But his thoughts went round in a sickening way, gone almost the moment they entered his head.

He found that Grove conducted a kind of human publicity service: he brought people together and talked admiringly about nearly everyone. But he never stayed long. He brought someone to the house and then left, as if he had many more missions to fulfil. Therefore he brought warmth and left a chill, in an enigmatic combination which had to do with his strange deeper self, that was always hidden, all the more for his quick repartee and cleverly transparent boasting. Grove knew—seemed to—that he was hurting Granville's life; but he did it like someone passing on a burden which he had carried himself too long; though he gave no sign of the burden in his eyes, or anywhere. He was hurt, somewhere: and he was frailly passing on the hurt, without malice, and with no real hope of getting rid of it for good.

Grove made easy capital out of winning a beautiful young wife from a sunny young husband: yet it wasn't any more than the petty capital he made all day, out of the smallest event, half joking, building up his little reputation all over again, like a laughing mole. Something made him try to build a stout little nest for himself wherever he was, as if

he had been dislodged every early in life and was always trying to get back, woffing himself round with intimacy, in talk and jokes and disarming boasts and promises. He did it a thousand times a day, this nest-building. Perhaps he had no other way of surviving. It wasn't a good way to survive, building a thousand nests a day, with everybody under the sun, in a dozen houses, at a dozen café-tables: you only needed one. So Pip didn't resent capital being made out of him—there was also something nice about the fairy-tale conquest that Grove hinted at to other people. For some hidden reason he needed it: it seemed to bring him an important mystical gain. As Pip was learning to do without reputation he could willingly let his go cheap. Perhaps this was what had always weighed Grove down, bringing a strained look into his eyes, suddenly thoughtful and tortured with regret, then gone again quickly: a burning need for reputation. Pip didn't need reputation for the kind of nest he wanted to build.

He went down to Abbott's Road to say good bye. They knew nothing about his having resigned, and he left it vague; his mother divined that something bad had happened but said nothing. She only asked quietly, "Is Pinkie going back with you?" From his panic-stricken glance she knew everything. His father was gracious as always, a little formal, gazing with narrow eyes into the garden. The table was laid with cheese and lettuce and celery, and the tea-pot stood under a cosy in the scullery as it always had in his childhood.

And she replied, patiently, as if to a child, "Yes, darling, yes!" He realised for the first time—in a clear, even blinding way—that she was in love. No power could change that. She couldn't change it, certainly. She had tried perhaps. Even, she had wanted to change it. But she couldn't. Because she was in love, in love, in love! The words kept ringing in his brain. In love! It was like bells. In love! Then why hadn't he recognised it? Oh, why? For it made her innocent! She was in love! The words rang out like joyful bells! In love! In love!

He walked further down the stairs and had the sense of losing his body so that his steps hardly made an impression on him. He felt bodiless—the stairs were nothing to him, his pain was nothing, nor his trembling! These didn't matter, didn't matter! There was a shudder of relief through his body that drained all the poisons away. She was innocent, innocent. It was like touching Christ, as if Christ was standing there on the stairs, in him for a moment, bodilessly. He had a sense of sunlight, though he was trembling like a leaf. The trembling wasn't his. She was pure! pure! The tears poured down his face but with triumph—it was like his own triumph! He had surrendered! surrendered! She wasn't bad after all, nor hard, but in love, in love! And that was everything.

~~a heater in, so they took their baths in one of the public places in London. But Dick refused to budge because of the view. He liked to bring people down and take them straight to the window at the end of the flat without flourish. He didn't seem aware of the instruments.~~

"The journey back in the evening seems to take longer every day," she said. "This is the sort of house I dream about." She sat quite still, rigid. "He spends the night in town about twice a week now, and then I'm stuck down there all alone. He could phone me to say he wasn't coming if we had a phone, but that's another of his ideas! People would pin him down by phone, you see!"

"Why pin him down?"

"They'd make him feel he belonged to one place!"

He smiled at her. "Old Dick's a rum bird, isn't he? What's he afraid of exactly?"

"I don't know. Comfort, I suppose! He might get fat and boring! Having a flat would put him on the road to having a family, you see. And that'd pin him down frightfully. What a fool he is, really! As long as he's got the river outside he feels safe. The water doesn't lead anywhere or belong to anyone."

"That's rather nice. The idea of the water. He's right in a way, isn't he?"

"In a way, yes." She nodded stiffly, as when she was saying something for form. "But of course," she went on with a rather grim smile, "he expects his meals on time."

Hanni worked in the Middle East section of the Foreign Office as an interpreter. But she never talked about it. The Middle East was a closed book. She'd even been silent about Granville's appointment to

~~selling newspapers on the corner, the same as before. He had thick glasses on and a black cap pulled over one eye. Granville's thoughts seemed ridiculously small amid this clatter! A bus passed swiftly, sending up a cloud of dust from the gutter, and the tiny man called out in a shrill voice, cupping his hand round his mouth in a mechanical way, "Paper! Mornin' paper!"~~

~~Not only did his thoughts seem ridiculous but he couldn't remember what they were. His mind had definitely quickened and was more wide-awake than in the house, but his thoughts were at best little half-messages flashing across his brain, never finished. The long, continuous theme of thought he'd had in the house was impossible now. Yet he was happy. The clatter of the street made up for the loss; it lived on his behalf.~~

Most of the passing women had bright print-dresses on, with bare arms. It was so different from Basrah, where the women went cloaked and veiled, their eyes darting from side to side in the slit of black cloth, flashing dimly like iron. Here they were so open and cheerful, touched by the sunlight. Some of the younger women walked in a provocative and challenging way, tight-hipped. One young woman passed him gazing straight before her, with the suggestion of a smile on her lips, well-built, pale, quite pretty, her jumper cut low enough to show the slight shadowy rift between her breasts, tantalising and subtly devised, as if there were hundreds of men's eyes on her. It was flirtation conducted in the brain, with anyone. She held a shopping basket in one hand, loosely, and her hips tolled as she walked. He passed within a foot or so of her and saw that had it not been for a line of anxiety near her mouth, seeming to indicate that her freedom would only last as long as the sunlight, she would have looked like the women of the cabarets in Mansur Street, voluptuous and calm.

But life was too plain for that, the line seemed to say. Yet in her body, in her long, graceful step and in the smile that showed in her eyes, distant and wonderfully self-assured, there was all she needed for freedom: but her life wouldn't allow it, making a line near her mouth. And the sex she suggested wasn't voluptuous. It was subtle and mental, meaning a quick, clandestine, forbidden contact. At the same time he was affected, and her closeness sent an unbearable, vibrant thrill through his body, making his mouth dry. Then she was gone.

On the other side of the road he caught sight of three or four detached houses behind fruit trees, little villas built at the end of the last century with porticos in timid, suburban imitation of the Palladian style. They looked so drab and stifling in their dingy brickwork! The windows and doors were too large, with the typical heavy and replete touch of the Victorians. Yet the houses weren't quite melancholy, perhaps because of the trees that surrounded them. And, because of the wooden fences in front of them, instead of iron railings, one could dream that they were part of a country scene with elm trees beyond. He stood still for a moment, gazing across at them. If only he'd come back to a place in the country! He might feel different then. The sunlight made these little villas with their fruit trees even sweeter. He walked back into the quiet of Chaworth Road and found Amy's shop empty. The bell clanged sharply above his head as he opened the door and at first he saw no one. Then he heard her voice.

"Well, Mr. Granville!" A few seconds afterwards her head appeared, flushed and smiling. She put her hand over the counter, wiping it first. "What a surprise! Your wife said you'd be back!

"Hullo, Amy, how are you?"

They shook hands.

"Oh, all right! Well ---" She stood gazing at him. "You are a stranger!"

She hadn't changed much: a little plumper, perhaps, with a touch of grey in her hair.

"How's the baby?" he asked.

"Baby? He's a grown man now. Look!"

*as he looks what?*  
He craned over the counter and in the shadows behind a pile of bright cartons saw a plump little child, flushed like his mother and with the same dark, healthy eyes, sitting astride, silently absorbed in a game of wooden shavings.

"He's as good as gold," she added, almost in a whisper, looking down.

Then the child lifted his head and looked Granville full in the eyes without the slightest change of expression, dark-eyed and absorbed, fixing on him the same look of abstract curiosity he'd just been giving to the wood shavings.

"That's not a nice way to say hullo," she murmured. She bent down and gave the child a tickle under the arm-pit, and he kicked out his feet, laughing suddenly.

"That's better," she said quietly, giving Granville a confiding glance as she rose again.

"He's got your eyes, hasn't he?" Granville said. "They're wonderful!"

She shifted and glanced at him shyly for a moment, seeming to think something over. Then she said firmly, "It's funny, you never get people saying what lovely eyes he's got. But it's a fact, isn't it, though I say it myself?"

"Oh, it's a fact all right!"

She looked down at the child again. "It tickles me, watching him play down there. I give him a little pile of wood shavings in the morning and it keeps him busy for hours. People come in here and say, Goodness gracious, have you got a baby down there!"

The child slowly ran his fingers through the shavings to make a tiny path, his mouth open.

"They're funny, aren't they?" she said. "Their own little world! The way he picks up a bit of shaving sometimes and holds it up for a minute as much as to say, Oh, and who are you? and then puts it down away from all the others."

"What's his name?"

"John, after his gran'dad!" Then she collected herself. "Well, Mr. Granville, what's it been like over there? Plenty of sun, I expect?"

"Oh, yes, a bit too much!"

"That's just what I thought. My husband was out there in the war. He said he all but melted sometimes!"

"Yes, it can be terrible."

She frowned for a moment. "What are they as a race out there?" And she added, "Persians, isn't it?"

"No, just Arabs. Persia's next door."

She laughed a little nervously. "Well, my geography never was up to much!" She gazed out of the window across the street. "Still, it's all the same in the end. I don't suppose we'll need geography where we're all going to, shall we?" And she laughed.

Together they watched someone go by outside, The milkman's crate clanged in the distance as he swung it on to the trolley.

"It must be nice getting back," she said. "There's nothing like home, is there?"

It reminded him of women's voices in his childhood, always reminiscent and sing-song like this, saying set phrases one after another. He felt lulled.

"I wish it was like this every day," he murmured, nodding out of the window.

"That's right --- we're not very lucky with our weather, are we? But when all's said and done there's nothing like the old country, I don't care what you say! I wouldn't say no to a couple of weeks overseas but they can keep their sun and their big moustaches as far as I'm concerned!"

"Moustaches?" he asked.

"Well, you know!" She laughed, seeing him stare at her. "Like old Macaroni --- haven't you seen him? He comes round with his hurdy-gurdy Saturday afternoons, they say he's made a tidy little packet from his pennies. Haven't you seen him with his little monkey?"

And, quite naturally, she began to sing. Her face showed no embarrassment at all. And she had quite a lovely voice, rather high and level.

Oh, Oh, An-to-nio! he's gone away!

Left me all alone-io! all on me own-io!

I'd like to meet him with his new sweetheart!

Then up would go Antonio, with his ice-cream cart!

She rested her hands on her hips as she sang. She had her head lifted, and her eyes had even some of that fierce heat he'd seen in abu Kath'm. She was singing softly, and it made him feel perfectly calm for a moment.

All these old songs had a vague regret, as if people were saying

good bye in them. He used to try and stop his mother singing them as a child. He would put his hand over her mouth and she would wrench it away again with a laugh. She had a faint, rich voice that seemed to come out of the past, And then he would cry. But she always persisted. She used to sing Daisy, Daisy, on a bicycle made for two! I'm half crazy all for the love of you! or Has anybody here seen Kelly? Kelly from the Isle of Man? And though they were rollicking songs, with a wonderful generous vigour about them, they always had this sadness, too. The vigour concealed a certain courage. They were cries of distress. They had a wild tenderness he found unbearable, as if they were the last messages from a lost world.

"You've got a nice voice," he said.

"Yes, that's right!" She turned and picked up a paper bag, blowing it open, to await his first order. The song had moved her as well, it seemed. "There's nothing like the old songs, is there?"

"No!"

"My old mother used to sing them when she'd had one too many. She had a voice like Marie Lloyd, so people said. She knew every word and she used to do all the gestures as well, you know." Then she stirred herself. "Well, this won't do, will it? What can I get you after my little recital?"

And as usual she gave him a little extra weight when he asked for bacon, and she gave him the same wink as always before.

"When are you off again?" she asked.

"Oh, I've got about two months here."

"Well, we'll be seeing something of you, then, won't we? And how's Mrs. Granville?" she asked, watching the scales.

"She's fine!"

"Does she like it out there as well?"

"She seems to!"

She paused. "It's funny, isn't it? I expect I'd settle down as right as rain if I went to a place like that. You've only got to try something, haven't you? You're lucky not to have children!"

"Yes, that'd be an extra worry, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, especially in the tropics. What's the heat like, really?"

"Well, it's a damp heat!"

"Oh, dear! It wouldn't be much good for me, then! I'm bad enough on a day like this!"

And there the conversation ended. He put everything in the canvas bag and they shook hands again with a smile. As he was leaving the shop she called out, "If Mrs. Granville's passing this way we'll be having some nice knuckles of ham in this afternoon!"

He walked back to the house in a perplexed state, seeing nothing round him, his head down. And he had a sense of restriction - in his tongue - as if it was chained down - from not having spoken his fill! To Amy! He never spoke the fullness of his feelings - no more! 'A man between two borders! he thought. He ought to have said more to her! Anything! He could have talked about his own mother, for instance! But he couldn't bring the same intimacy to his voice. He'd travelled too far away: it would be like acting a part. And he's disliked this feeling. Much remained to be thought out. 'Back in England,' he thought. 'Back to my problems!'

He glanced at the morning paper on the way upstairs. The headlines said OH! OH! PRINCE CHARMING! in enormous letters. Apparently, there was a yacht-race somewhere and the English boat was called Prince Charming. It was making bad time or something.

There were no matches in the kitchen, so he slipped quietly back to the bedroom, where he thought he remembered seeing some on the chimney-piece. He opened the door very carefully and tiptoed into the dim room. Pinkie was in exactly the same position as he'd left her. He stopped, gazing down at her. It was the same silence as when he'd woken up, soft and enclosing, and he felt worlds away from it now.

There was a bulge in the bedclothes where her arm lay over her hip, and all at once he remembered the child they were supposed to have had. She'd done away with it! Yes! He gasped, looking down at her, as if she'd just told him the truth. It felt as if somebody had gone away. Perhaps all this time, unawares, in Basrah and on the voyage, he'd been assuming the presence of a third spirit in her --- the only part of them that would have been innocent! The child! Where was their child? Her face had a pale, smooth look --- he had the sensation that something close to her had stolen away while she slept and she didn't know it yet. There was the pallor of loss.

A breeze came. No, she hadn't killed the child! Pinkie would never, never do a thing like that! It was his fault, perhaps. The child had stifled inside her, because of his half-hearted little orgasm. Again his heart started beating fast with shame. He hadn't filled her with that terrific pride of being necessary for a woman! He went out of the room quickly and let the thought die, becoming calm again, in the dazzling light of the music-room.

put on terrific airs. It was awful to see them together, Pinkie blushing and intimidated, the girl uppish and pouting. The appearance of Kath'm at the door in his striped dishdasha, with bare feet, was enough to send Bertha flying out of the room. He was dirty, she said, and brought bugs into the house, which was probably true. She hated to see his dark, bare feet on the tiles. And Kath'm bore it with a stern, untroubled face, his eyes twinkling a little. Bertha's family-bible sat on a little table in the sitting-room with a heavy silver-plated crucifix laid across it, and she forbade Kath'm to go anywhere near it, much less to dust it in his clumsy way. And when he passed it sometimes he would give it a quick, sidelong glance in awe and hurry on. Bertha had a room next to the dining-room and could have put the bible there, but she wanted it as a demonstration (of her class-standing - as a Christian) and Pinkie said nothing. It was effective, too, because Kath'm treated it as something magical like the evil eye.

Kath'm was always in good humour, and discreet and quiet. He tiptoed upstairs with Granville's breakfast in the morning, and would smile at him with a quick flash of white teeth. And he would whisper, hissing, as he bent down with the tray, "Sahib, sahib, chai wa halib!" --- tea with milk; he repeated it every morning. There was a clear, perfectly understood relation between them against Bertha. Yet Kath'm never uttered a word against her. Indeed, he never uttered more than a few words all day.

Pinkie always packed Kath'm off to his hut in the evening, and told Bertha she could go to her room. She preferred serving dinner herself, even when there were guests. For this she needed Granville's help and he would potter around the table like a servant, to the distress of his Arab friends. He got furious about this but she said the penalty of having

Kath'm in the house would be her going up to bed instead of entertaining.

"But what are servants for?" he asked her.

"I can't help it, I can't bear servants round me, that's all!"

"But he loves serving at table!"

This was true. Kath'm thought she was ashamed of showing him to the guests! 'Dirty' - as Bertha said he was! And one evening Granville found him gazing wistfully in at the dining room window in the cold air, his nose pressed against the glass, fascinated by the warm glow inside. Kath'm loved to put on a clean robe and pad softly across the floor fetching tea or coffee as he did during the day if a guest called. But Pinkie said that working in the evening was 'over-time', for which he wasn't paid. It was a strangely tame and social attitude for her, and didn't fit her nature. The fact was that she couldn't bear the responsibility of someone taking orders from her. She couldn't bear the idea of guiding other people's lives.

And his Arab guests would look on in astonishment. It was frightful aib, shame, not to have servants about, and they wondered how he could be chief in the T.I.M. office.

But still, - this created a problem of conscience for Granville as well. He had to work in with the sheikhs, some of them hard, greedy, exploiting men. Once he nearly wrote home for a change of post. He lived like a little king though he was only a clerk. When he walked through the streets sometimes between the dark, ragged, sallow people he had an uncomfortable impression of himself as soigne and well-wined. Even a clean shirt and a suit felt too much. It was a position forced on him. The sheikhs and the Arab and Kurdish businessmen passed by in their Cadillacs, Fords and Oldsmobiles, kicking up the dust, their chauffeurs cursing at the

he worshipped her. The name Waffle-Waffle came from the way he spoke, it being almost impossible to understand what he said. Beatrice had had a son and two daughters by him, and now, with the help of her son Derick, she ran a finishing school for girls in Mayfair.

Pinkie was the youngest of a family of nine. Always 'baby Hester'. Her nurse had always told her, to make her sense of loneliness worse, that she had 'the mark of the Grysham in her'. She'd told this to all the children at different times but with Pinkie it stuck. The mark of the Grysham meant a certain wildness of temperament --- a kind of noble dissipation that ran in the family. At the Aldercote hunt balls pokers were used to open the champagne bottles, the bannisters of the main staircase were 'saddled' so that the men could ride down them with their shoes in the stirrups, shouting Yoick at the top of their voices. Sometimes Pinkie's father brought down a chorus-girl for the week-end or went off to Brighton on the non-stop train from Waterloo that everybody called The Flying Fornicator. He was also quiet and charming. Not that Granville had met him. They lived on a Caribbean island these days.

But he'd seen Aldercote once. Pinkie was born there, but already in her childhood only part of it was used. The farm was sold up, then the stables. Nearly the whole of the estate round the house had been shaped and planted by Gryshams in the last two hundred years. It had an unbelievable tranquillity --- it was really like a blow, stunning you suddenly, a terrific, blinding word from a kind of people who no longer existed on this earth. There were oaks and elms and a lake where wild duck nested.

Her nickname 'Pinkie' came about when she was fifteen. It was during her first studio-party, given by a friend of her mother's who

smoked Russian cigarettes from a long ivory holder and slept in a hammock slung between two enormous pieces of sculpture. Pinkie arrived in a paroxysm of shyness, her mouth working up and down helplessly and her eyes flickering. After tea the others started talking about the psychological meaning of colours. Yellow meant homosexuality, red meant sexual frustration: if you showed great fondness for these colours you were a 'frigid' or a 'queer'. Then, during a hush, a small, plump young man with a red-golden beard suddenly turned to her and asked, "What's your favourite colour, Miss Grysham?" To which Miss Grysham replied, with a blush going slowly up her neck while everybody gazed at her, "Pink -- I think!" Everyone laughed. As she usually blushed every minutes anyway the nickname stuck. Pity was an old-fashioned virtue among these people: hard-faced bohemians with money in their pockets. They called her 'a flower of the English aristocracy' --- facetiously of course. She was so 'traditional' -- a museum piece! And everything from her soft, half-pained, tragic way of speaking to her liking Gainsborough must go. Her politeness was 'pompous'. Once she ingenuously asked the red-golden beard if hellfire was true -- and the answer she got was a huge book on comparative religion! It was all in there, he said --- religion was just primitive hopes and fears, nothing to do with us. And a week later he had her in bed. He said she had the softest and warmest and most yielding little twat of any virgin he'd deflowered. He tried her later with a cucumber; he wanted her to go at it less 'sacredly'.

Nigel, her eldest brother, was the one she was closest to. He was the smell of the countryside for her --- real health. And he'd always been the nicest to her. After the last war he'd put his army annuity and his family-allowance together and started a retail business in London, and

it turned out well. He even gave Pinkie a job. Then he started stables, bought a place for himself in the country and was called 'squire' by the local romantics. The work he gave Pinkie, as a kind of traveller for the firm, on the public relations side, was good for her self-respect. And she was good at it. That was why she visited the T.I.M. training school, as part of her job, scouting for young people. She met Granville and Dick, who were the only people there with 'style', she said.

She didn't see much of Nigel these days. He lived more and more in the country, and spent a lot of his time hanging round the stables talking horseflesh. He was a tall, fair-haired man with rosy cheeks and broad shoulders, his eyes much like Pinkie's except that they were steady and searching, with a constant smile in them. He had the same rash and daredevil streak as his father, coupled with Pinkie's softness. The moment they were together they fell into horse-talk. She played the part, out of love for him. The mare had a 'cold back', Nigel would say, and was a bit 'fiddle-headed', with a tendency to 'dish'. Or the grey had 'lots in front of him' though he 'grunted under the stick'. "A terrible high blower!" he would say, and Pinkie would laugh.

There was an indefinable element of unhappiness in Nigel. It lay under his sunny good will and was even part of it. But he never talked about himself. He only mentioned himself in connection with something he'd seen or enjoyed. It was 'unsporting' to be disgruntled or irritable. A man had to be above that. His first question after he'd had a nasty fall one day and cracked his arm was whether the mare had been 'damaged'. He married late, a girl called Mary who hardly spoke and looked after the house quietly and carefully.

In the war he was known as 'Nutty Nigel' because of his forays

CHAPTER 7.

Pinkie was given an office of her own at Wembley, as assistant to the P.R.O.; it was quite a promotion and came from Nigel's staff, not from him. Now and then it involved her in taking someone to lunch or dinner. She no longer travelled for the firm, but, she said, she might have to spend a week-end away in Manchester or Birmingham. He wondered at this. It sounded like the screw being turned. Her face was set as she said it, in a deliberate way, her teeth gritted. She looked tired in the evenings, her face always drawn into a mask, and they never went out together now. The house grew quite lonely. Or perhaps it wasn't the house but the fact that only he, of all the people they knew, had time for wayward thoughts. Everyone else was governed by schedule. He felt he carried no weight in their company and began to wish for the end of his leave.

Dick came in one evening and said he was getting the managership of the South American department in a few weeks' time. Apparently, he thought Hanni had said nothing to anyone. His eyes glittered in a fixed way as if he was torn between his own achievement and a sense of shame. Usually one didn't get a managership until one was thirty-five or forty, especially in T.I.M. where things were a bit conservative. He didn't seem at all happy. Hanni kept glancing at him. She also was in a strange mood these days.

They were all sitting in the kitchen and Hanni murmured to Pinkie

between her teeth, "Look at him!" Dick was swinging on his chair --- a nervous habit of his --- with his hands in his pockets and his head rather sunk down. "He hates the idea!" She gave Dick a dry side-glance. "He was all right when somebody else was giving the orders. It made him feel young. But now he's going to have people calling him sir."

And she chuckled, puffing at a cigarette. Dick had a remarkably clean look, as often on days when he felt uncomfortable. His hair was neatly brushed and he was pale, with a youthful, purged look in his eyes. His hands were manicured; he had them done every fortnight at the same shop in the City: he said the girl touched his fingers gave him endless chances to explore her character and also look down her blouse --- one day he would ask her to meet him somewhere.

Hanni's eyes were narrowed against the smoke of her own cigarette, and they seemed to blaze with anger. Pinkie smiled, in a private understanding with her. She had put her handbag on the floor, having just come in from the office, and was powdering her nose, pursing her lips as if afraid to see herself in the little mirror.

"He's afraid he's going to get like his father," Hanni went on, trying to provoke him out of his silence.

And Dick did speak after a time, still swinging on his chair, gazing down, his voice very quiet.

"Well," he murmured, "you ought to know."

"Why are you so scared of responsibility?" she asked him immediately, her eyes fixed hard on him.

But he relapsed into silence again. Hanni pursued the subject coolly.

"Of course, it means you'll be getting a better screw; doesn't it?"

she went on.

Dick nodded in silence.

"And we don't want that to happen! You'd rather go on with the old screw, wouldn't you, and have the freedom?"

"Yes, I suppose I would," he replied in a tired way. "The problem of youth, you know!" he added bitterly.

Pinkie laughed. "You'd better be careful, old cock, or you'll find yourself furnishing your flat nicely!"

"Yes," Hanni said, also laughing. "He might find himself tied down to a comfortable armchair!"

"Probably," Pinkie went on, "he's just like his dad really, only he doesn't want to fall into it too fast."

This was too much for Dick. He hissed at her, "Shut up!" And the women laughed in a defensive and triumphant way, at having provoked him; their voices were harsh.

"What's wrong with your dad?" Pinkie cried, her lips trembling as always when she was reprimanded.

Dick coolly got up from his chair and left the room. Later Granville saw him glance at himself in the mirror downstairs on his way out, his face delicate and troubled. He turned and saw him.

"I hate any comparison with my dad," he said almost in a whisper. Granville nodded and smiled, wondering if he meant it as a joke, but Dick walked out with a perfectly straight face, little aware of him, it seemed; and a moment later the downstairs door closed.

Afterwards Pinkie said that Dick looked exactly like his father. She'd got this from Hanni. Perhaps it explained the beard, she said: it was a sort of distress-signal; he was 'marooned in his body'.

When they all met again the following week-end there was more irritation, to which Granville was only a spectator. He noticed more and more that their quarrels left him a stranger.

Dick happened to say, "Oh, by the way," addressing Granville, "I always spit a Pip in old Nevinson's eye when I can, you know, just to let him know what a fine chap you are."

Nevinson, being the head of the Middle East section, was important for him, though they'd never met.

And Pinkie was suddenly annoyed.

"I bet you do it carefully!" she said, flaring up.

There was silence and Dick's lips tightened just as they'd done before. He fixed his eyes on her and murmured, "No, I don't."

"Well, I can't imagine you laying it on very thick, in case you're proved wrong ---"

"No, and I can't imagine Nevinson listening if I did!"

Granville was forgotten for a moment. They were fixed on each other.

"Well, good old Dick!" she cried. "You're nothing if not judicious!"

Dick turned to her and said quietly, his eyes full of dislike, "How do you stand this woman every day?"

"Why is it you like keeping things under your hat?" she asked, trembling again.

"I suppose because I'm cagey," he replied.

"Well, it's no surprise to me that some of your clients are speechless when they walk in your office. You give them the willies; old chap!"

"I don't think you've been in my office or spoken to any of my staff," he replied, again in a quiet voice, his back erect. There was something white-hot and cutting in him when he was stirred sometimes.

Both Dick and Pinkie had to go out to dinner later and Hanni told him when they were alone that Dick had annoyed Pinkie by 'keeping something under his hat' that was important to her. Granville couldn't understand what this was and tried to get to the bottom of it. But she was evasive. Yet her dark, protective gaze told him that one day she would explain: at least, she'd made it clear that there was something to explain.

There was good news for him. Glenning said he'd heard he might be getting the Beirut office! This was because Nevinson didn't like the way things were done there; he preferred Granville and thought he had a better rapport with the Arabs. Of course, this was promotion. Beirut was considered a gem in the foreign sections at least as far as the 'sweat-jobs' were concerned, being the 'Paris of the Middle East.'

This brought him and Pinkie closer together for a time. That evening, as they were going to bed, they began talking about it, and without warning the intimacy of their very first two weeks together, when they'd met at Reading, enveloped them again.

"Isn't it wonderful about Beirut?" she said.

"Yes!"

"We could have one of those lovely houses by the sea!"

"That's exactly what I thought!"

"When do you think it'll be?" she asked.

"Soon, I hope."

He switched off the light and got into bed at her side.

"It'll be lovely moving there," she said quietly.

"Yes!"

He was surprised how soft her body felt at his side --- quite different from that first evening, when she'd felt angular and also frail to his touch, distant from him, in her own strange sleep, without the necessary blood for intimacy. Now she was soft and yet firm, with a kind of invisible plump wholesomeness of the flesh.

Out of this sudden intimacy they drew everything that was possible --- for a change. They kissed each other sweetly and softly, like children, again and again, their lips wet, and they clung to each other in a gentle way, not exploring each other's bodies but locked together mildly, their breath intermingled, in a closeness of perfect health. It was quite different from 'Stratford' --- it was what their love should have been when it wasn't 'Stratford'. They came almost at the same moment, mildly and completely, sunk into each other with this unpausing sweet intimacy. Her orgasm never wracked her whole body --- it was always local, as if limited naturally, half-broken from childhood, made too secretive for the natural-functioning world. But at least they were together, in sweetness. They fell asleep at once, staying in the same position all night, her right leg crooked over him and her flimsy nightdress in a bundle round her waist, like a thick silk band under her breasts, making them swell. It was like being in a region underneath life, full of warm, shadowy touches that weren't even definite enough to be known as touches; and next day they were both clear and happy-looking.

They went on the river again at Hampton Court, this time the four of them. It was a lovely, still day and he felt drowsy and content. The

reeds on either side were dry and tall, stirring slightly in the breeze. They'd taken out a punt but were using canoe-paddles instead of a pole because the water was too deep. Hanni and Binkie were lying at the bottom of the boat sunning themselves while the men paddled quietly side by side. They left houses behind them and came into perfectly silent countryside. Before them in the distance there were hills, smooth and bright like a marvellous cloth, and on either side there were fields with hedges, at their own level, so that they seemed to be gliding silently through the earth. Granville felt quite rid of his problems now. He had no extra desires.

And as if a sense of what he was thinking had entered Dick the question came from his side, "I should think Basrah's a bit of a dump, isn't it? *Despite what you say about mystery and all that.*"

"Well ---"

"I mean, politeness aside!"

He hesitated. "Yes, I suppose it is."

Their voices echoed a little across the river.

"Of course, you have to put a good face on it," ~~and all that,~~

Dick added.

This wasn't Granville's feeling at all and he <sup>again</sup> wanted to explain what the <sup>s</sup> fascination of Basrah was for him. But Dick had already looked away and was addressing something to Hanni who lay behind them with her eyes closed, ~~getting~~ a bit flushed from the sun. This had happened quite frequently in the last few weeks: Dick would ask a question and then show, by turning away to something else, that it was really <sup>+</sup> rhetorical. Meanwhile the words rushed to Granville's mouth and he was left feeling like a man with nowhere to put his vomit.

Pinkie opened her eyes and murmured, "Do you remember that fish we cooked in the garden?"

"It's a kind of cod," she added to Dick, who was gazing at the water with a genial expression. Then she chuckled: "Of course, it did taste a leetle of burned wood!"

"Oh, well," Dick said, making his noiseless laugh, "bedouins can't be choosers, can they?"

There was more pleasantry and Granville stomached his words, letting the heat go down slowly. He found it easiest to talk to Dick, and closest to the style of talk that existed between the four of them, when his feelings were at a minimum. As long as he kept a check on himself it was all right, but if he let himself go he was left with a feeling of regret or constricted stomach.

As the pleasantry went on --- now it was about a 'ghastly' dinner Dick had been to the previous week --- the lovely day began to darken for him. He wanted to laugh and did, and also he was content. But the fields looked dwindled to him and he had a sense of dryness and surfeit, as if everything round him was fixed and dead in its position. A casual and bland style existed between the four of them in which sustained ideas were impossible. One just had to learn how to leap from one thing to the next, never dipping too far. The moment a tone of sustained interest came into his voice the conversation dropped a kittle. This wasn't Dick's doing; not wholly. He thought it might have something to do with the company being nexed, two men and two women, so that a compromise-style was achieved, neither the sustained intimacy of women's talk nor the enquiry of men's. The style, flippant and selective, though not always flippant, was the only one they could all have together. Yet it wasn't natural to any of them.

Dick imposed it as an act of will, so deep now that it was second nature. And Hanni was tense, keeping back her spontaneity, gripped tight inside. Only Pinkie had the style in her flesh; it wasn't a strained or unnatural or jarring element in her, nor did it involve mental surveillance. She lay at the bottom of the boat with her eyes half-closed, listless, the touch of a smile lingering on her mouth. A selective conversation, ranging quickly over many subjects, never committed to any, was natural to her. Going deep would be like a breach of delicacy. It was a light curiosity that touched on things and departed. She and Dick were similar in this, while Granville and Hanni were similar in their silent withholding of the battalions of truth, though Granville was always looking for a breach in the enemy-line to pour them through.

Pinkie knew naturally how to select and range over subjects, and what was permissible and what was not. Discretion played no part. She could be as rash as she liked but style lay in her flesh, not limiting her, but the very form of her being. In her quiet moods she would sit with a reminiscent gaze, talking casually, rather in a dream, and every now and then she would touch the tip of her forefinger with her tongue in a delicate, slow, gliding movement, still gazing before her, while preparing to talk again, as if to indicate the turn of her interest. After she and Granville had been away from each other for some time she would lap up all his information afterwards in one or two sittings, leaning back, her gaze upwards, asking one question after another in the most economical way, but without mental alertness, only following her curiosity with a casual, dreamy obedience. She hadn't done it this time, though. She asked nothing about his last month in Basrah. It seemed that Mohammed and the Cabala and the club-room at the United Kingdom Compound where she hated going so much ---

all the things she would naturally want to know about --- were now dead in her memory.

The four of them ended up at the pub with the lawn where he and Dick had played croquet once. This time also it got dark. The evening was warm and exciting, with yellow lights on the other side of the river and the sound of grasshoppers. There were young couples playing croquet, their voices drifting between the trees, laughing. The sun went down in a vast red blaze, making the flat water glow like a lantern spread out. How lovely it was! London seemed many miles away. The perfect silence of countryside began to fall all round and their voices became hushed in the air. How could he bear to return to Basrah? Pinkie was close to him, her shoulders brown from the sun, strong and dark in the last shadows. Then they paddled slowly back to Hampton Court, but this time there was a moon and everyone was drowsy from the beer and heat. His arms were burned where he'd rolled up his sleeves, and he noticed that Dick's face was flushed deep and his hair bleached slightly at the front. He could see his beard as they paddled, wisps of it silhouetted like a thin bush against the moonlit bank on the other side.

"Penny for your thoughts, sea-scouts," Dick murmured.

"I'm remembering last time when it was dark."

"Oh, yes!" And Dick began telling the other two in a comical way how they'd battled their way back home. "How Captain Granville and I brought her in that night I shall never know," he said. "But we did! And there's not a crew between here and Southend Pier could say better!"

His voice was like a soft chant in the night, as they drifted slowly along, the women chuckling in the darkness now and then. He had an impression of each of their consciousness drifting in the darkness

far from each other, so that the set forms of the day --- their bodies and the glances they gave each other and what they said --- appeared like an irrelevant world, or rather a partial one. Dick 's voice, and the darkness that was like an unsubstantial dust all round them, and the gradual tipping and rocking of the boat, were the relevant world, of which the set forms were a part we needed in order to move and see and set our wills at work. These forms were like gestures.

Underneath the gestures what were their consciousnesses like? It was so difficult to tell. How did they differ from each other, essentially? What was Hanni like, really? What were Pinkie and Dick like, for their saying more than Hanni made them no clearer in the end? What did this 'really' mean? People were so separate these days! The bare physical world lay outside each one; and each consciousness was in isolation, lacking the common joining factor of an outside world, which was silent and indifferent, like the moonlit bank that passed them now, without familiarity for them - only a scene like a film, which would be called 'beautiful', detached from them. And each of their consciousnesses lay floating in this unsubstantial and indifferent dust of night as they drifted smoothly along.

Only someone outside a consciousness could say what it was like, for we couldn't see into the endless depth of our selves. Between self and gesture where did the truth lie? The gestures were so difficult to judge for someone outside. Even Pinkie he couldn't divine. He knew her only where there were no longer any gestures, when they were lying in bed at night, he curled round her, so that even their limbs were like the unsubstantial dust, joined together. And then during the day the gestures began again, and they perplexed each other.

Did his own consciousness differ essentially from those of the other three? Was the discipline to withhold themselves that he noticed in Dick and Hanni in him as well? Was theirs the typical consciousness of the new world he had inherited through education? Was it second nature to Dick or Hanni? Or was it second nature only to Dick? Was there an ancient sense of style in Pinkie that could accommodate itself to this new consciousness while not really belonging to it? For Dick's style was a mental one; it wasn't part of the flesh as her's was. He thought that perhaps Dick had the most typical new consciousness of all of them.

His mind asked these questions in a state of dreaming and he was too sleepy to answer them. It intrigued him. He came from a different consciousness from the one he knew now --- it wasn't enough to say a different world, as if we all shared the same kind of consciousness. This was the basic fact from which all his questions and problems came. Was his own consciousness divided - incomplete through knowing two worlds instead of one?

He felt that the others, though perhaps not Hanni, had a whole and undivided consciousness while he didn't, however distorted their consciousness might be. His task was to think his problems through in order to attain to a similar wholeness: he didn't want to be divided. The others weren't divided in their perceptions as he was. In hearing and seeing and smelling Dick didn't doubt that he was simply hearing and seeing and smelling as other men always had done everywhere and always would. That was Granville's conclusion, after seeing his gestures and hearing him talk. There was something undoubting in Dick which he himself didn't have; not in the matter of will or desire but in consciousness. Nor in ideas - only in consciousness, the dumb consciousness. For Granville there was always the

CUT To  
P. 240

BOOK II

CHAPTER 8.

Philip Granville was born in Abbott's Road in West Ham, not far from where he lived now; his parents had moved there from Bethnal Green just before the 1914 war, when there were still traces of the old village, though even then there were few. When they moved in there was an orchard opposite their home but by the time he was born streets covered more or less the whole district, formed into oblong blocks, one door after another with a few feet of garden in front for evergreen bushes, then iron railings and the pavement, stretching for miles, with nearly all the trees felled.

Abbott's Road houses were a better class than those of Bethnal Green, where the front door opened straight out on to the pavement and the streets were much longer and bleaker; also the houses of Bethnal Green were smaller, with a tiny asphalt yard in the back instead of a garden. Abbott's Road had quite nice back-gardens. Some of the old village trees were still intact there, by an oversight or perhaps by the contractor's mercy, standing in the middle of the narrow strips of garden, huge elms casting their shade on the roofs and swaying slightly in the wind with a grand, solemn movement that always seemed to give warning of storms. There was always talk of pulling them down but it never came to anything. He noticed as a child that sometimes people talked about them with grudging dislike, as if they were human, a moral affront one didn't talk about loudly. "Those damned trees," they would say. "Those blasted trees, when are they going to pull them down?" But in the summer they would

lean out of the back-windows gazing at them, smoking, the men in their shirt-sleeves.

The village had been called Abbott's Blenchley. It had straggled along the banks of a delightful little river called the Abbott which was dark and rank now, hardly more than a stream and completely hidden by shops and houses, with the waste from the Blenchley Road factories pouring into it. But here and there a grassy bank remained, strangely quiet, like someone peeping out from the past. An orphanage also remained, and the original Green behind Abbott's Road, made square now with iron railings round it, and the Common at the top of the hill near Tatlin Broadway. The Common was rough, with untidy bushes and little ridges and hillocks, and as a child he used to go to the centre so that he could look all round him and see no buildings at all, only trees and goarse grass.

Cattle still grazed in the orphanage grounds and it was possible to stand in Tatlin Road, which ran by the side of it, and imagine oneself in the country. Even Tatlin Road had a country-look at times; there were only houses down one side and these were detached, standing in their own gardens.

Tatlin Broadway was a shabby, crowded shopping-centre where everything used to be squeezed into one narrow street --- trams, wheelbarrows, Woolworths and Marks and Spencers, cinemas and cake-shops and crowds of people. He was always excited when they went there on Saturday afternoons to do the big shopping for the week. The lights blazed on both sides, one bright shop-front after another; and people pressed together on the pavement, talking and smiling, calling after their children in the wonderful glow. There were long, roofed-in markets leading from dark archways, like immense corridors with blazing gas-jets, and there one could

see everything, vegetables, toys, clothes, furniture, sweets and tall boxes of biscuits and shining glassware all in a massive array, while the market-men's voices rang out, exhorting the women to buy, "Now come on, sweetheart, you won't get a chance like this again!"

One always came back from Tatlin Broadway loaded with bags; everything would be put out on the table first, then checked with the shopping list and put into the larder. His mother would mix a cake for Sunday, while the fire shone white-hot in the grate, before they all went down to the local Co-op for a dance or whist-drive; these usually took place at a school at the end of the road, called Abbott's Road Junior School, where he and his brothers went until they were eleven.

At the end of Abbott's Road there was still the village inn from two hundred and fifty years before, with a cobbled yard in front of it. The river ran behind, at the foot of the garden, where there were tables and a bowling pitch in the summer. Even the stables were still there: also the Smithie, in a small barn shaded by a huge oak. He always heard the hammering from his classroom in the junior school, which was exactly opposite; and sometimes he would go across and watch the horses being shod. He was always astonished that they didn't cry out, having long nails driven into their feet. They stood there placidly, old cart horses with fat bellies and lovely long manes, blinking and shaking the flies off, their bright coats twitching, with one leg tucked up, while the trams rocked and screeched outside. That was about ten years before the 1939 war. Afterwards one saw few horses about, unless they were the huge brown dray-horses that were still kept by some of the breweries for old times' sake. The stables were torn down after an incendiary bomb caught one of the timbers during an air-raid. Also the junior school was removed by a

land-mine in 1944. All the windows in the street were blown out when that land-mine fell and the road was knee-deep in rubble for nearly a week afterwards. The windows of the inn had been blown out, too, and much of the roof destroyed. But the tiles were put back carefully and it all looked much the same as before, except that it was cleaner, like everything else in the district, without the old griminess, and the cobbles in front were removed to make an <sup>k</sup>ealier parking space for cars. The walls in Abbott's Road before the war were more smoky and dingy, and this had given them a more mysterious look.

Every house was divided into flats, one upstairs and one down, and his family used to live in an upper one. The back-rooms looked across the gardens and were level with the thickest branches of the great elms. They were hot and tiny, and all the family-life went on in them. Along rails over the fireplace handkerchiefs and socks were hung to dry, and in front there was a brass fender where his father's slippers were left to warm before he came in from work. In the middle of the room there was a table big enough for eight people at a squeeze, with a thick brown cover over it, under a tasselled gas-light. And along one wall was a big dresser where all the crockery showed, and opposite this, set in the wall over the back stairs, was the larder, where he and his brother hid when they were playing hide-and-seek. In that larder there were bags of dried fruit that his father brought home from the docks on Friday nights.

He and his brother did their school-work in the back room, spreading their books over the table and telling each other "Shut up!" now and then or "Put a sock in it!" Next door, by the larder, there was a scullery with a deep copper for boiling clothes, and a gas stove. His mother had the boiler removed, to the distress of the landlord, but soon

after the war started the rest of the street followed suit; she was often quicker in her ideas than other people. She said the boiler was a 'blasted old-fashioned thing' and 'the only creatures who liked it were the mice!'

Trams ran along at the end of the street and he could hear their heavy clanging noise from where he slept. Opposite his window there was a line of roof that stretched uninterrupted the whole length of the street. Everything was regular and fixed like this. There were chimney-pots at regular intervals and beyond them the empty sky. But even so the street had a small, intimate look sometimes and on summer evenings when the sky was angry and low it would seem to be indoors, exciting, as if an enormous glass roof had been constructed over it, like the Crystal Palace. And when there was thick snow it looked like a tiny village-street. He hated people to come out and shovel the snow into the gutter, which they nearly always did, making nasty black marks on the pavement; but then sometimes the snow came again and made what they did ridiculous. One day the Crystal Palace burst into flames and he went out into the street and saw the glow of its fire rising and falling in the sky, making the evening red.

The street was nearly always quiet, like the countryside. Now and then, in the evening, especially in the winter, there came the sound of a piano from behind drawn curtains on the other side, hesitant and out of tune, melancholy like someone crying, without an audience. He and his sister, younger than he was, slept in the spare room overlooking the street, while their two brothers shared a bigger room overlooking the side-yard, where drains gurgled all day.

One of the family got to a university --- that was a great event; it was his eldest brother, and all hopes were centred on him, as the

cleverest of the four. Granville tried to repeat the success but failed. His other brother went into a stockbroker's office at the age of seventeen and later became quite a successful business-man.

In a way Granville had an easier time than either of his brothers. They felt protectively towards him and were always trying to groom him and prepare him for the world. Both he and his sister basked in grown-up adoration. By the time they were ten and twelve his brothers were already bringing money into the house. The first struggles were over and things felt safer.

Through his brothers he met middle-class people when he was only a child, so that he came to know sooner than they did that outside Abbott's Road there was a world quite different from his own. He was better prepared for the shocks than they were.

After the university his eldest brother was almost crushed. He became a drunk and went down to Abbott's Road asking for money. He had filled Granville with his dreams of what life could be like outside Abbott's Road. It was to be so glorious! Then the dreams collapsed, or rather they were worn slowly down, and he almost went to pieces. But then as suddenly he mended and became quiet and sober. He started a family and took up a job with a mining company in South Africa, in mathematics. His learning always intimidated Granville. He had a natural grasp which he, Granville, couldn't imitate. As for his sister, she married and he hardly saw her now. Sometimes he remembered her quiet face from his childhood and wished he'd married a girl from Abbott's Road.

The family often used to go over to Bethnal Green when they were children to see his father's family. At first they used to go every

Saturday night. Life was more in the open at Bethnal Green; there were ragged children everywhere, in loud, scrambling groups. And the streets looked wider and more hollow, flattened out to the sky, with a raw, smoky air that grimed everything and yet made it like a new lurid countryside, iron-coloured and dusty, very still and solemn like a strange ghastly and fascinating monument. The rooms there were dark and small, and in the summer people sat in their doorways or on benches put out on the pavement, the women suckling their babies. At night about ten o'clock old women with laced-up boots used to shuffle down to the off-licence for their jug of stout. His grandmother used to pull the shawl round her shoulders and set off with her flower-painted jug gripped tight in her hand, her lips pursed mutely together and an obstinate look in her eyes. She was small and pale, with an extraordinary iron obstinacy.

After the pubs closed there were usually fights, too. The police kept out of the district on the whole, and it was a law to itself. There was the smell of cooking from the faggots-and-peas-pudding shop round the corner, and outside the pub where his uncle went there was always a man with a horse-and-cart selling cockles and winkles; he used to call out, "COCK-les end WINK-les!" in a sing-song voice like someone yodelling. The trams rumbled past with their yellow lights, up on the big road, where the darkness of these streets, that rose and fell in deep hills as if they'd been poured on to the earth like lava, ceased for a time. The streets were always dim at night with a wonderful mysteriousness, because the lamps were few, much fewer than at Abbott's Road. It was still really the Victorian world, whereas Abbott's Road belonged to the era of the first war when people wanted to end the old scrambling life. His mother's ambition had always been to achieve the new order, of clean streets and

doors that remained closed. She said the words 'Bethnel Green' with a touch of contempt, as she said 'King George's Dock', where his father worked. She wanted an end to the ould rough life. And those were her words for roughness.

In Bethnel Green there was a dusty, vagabondish, warm atmosphere. When he was a baby the women still wore wide hats and veils over their faces, and gaitered boots which they used to do up with eye-hooks. The men wore dark suits with high collars and bowler hats.

Going over to Bethnel Green on Saturday nights was an unquestioned habit at first, but his mother always seemed to want to draw her children back from the life there, with a certain grim distaste. And he hated going there more and more, as if in obedience to her. He and his sister would be taken while the older brothers stayed at home. Even as a child he felt his mother was giving him and his sister a silent directive about Bethnel Green life. She joined in it, singing and laughing, but she seemed to be telling them, as they kept close to her, that she was reserving another future for them.

They all crowded into one tiny, stifling room --- his cousins, his grandmother, Aunt May who was his father's sister, and sundry husbands and other sisters. The men were slow and blinking, except May's husband. Granville went there with a divided fascination even as a child, beeling the division in his mother.

Aunt May, next to his father in age in a family of eleven, was a kind of queen to them all. She had golden hair which she did in braids, and a soft, long, beautiful face. Sometimes he watched her take out her braids until she stood there like a child with golden hair down to the middle of her back. He adored her with that haunted physical passion of

childhood. He followed her wherever she went, listening to her voice, that seemed to be eternal. She shouted everything, her head lifted up, with moist, red lips, but her voice never lost its gentleness; she seemed to be crying or singing. She swore with nearly every sentence, with a deep, ribald look in her eyes. The name 'May' always had a special sound, seeming to cover things deep in the past of the family, like a wonderful, golden memory of something long ago, not a person at all. She and his father were the closest in the family; he had a clean, wholesome look which May admired, and when he appeared in the doorway she would shout, "Well, bless my arse! There's Alfred! Come and give your sister a kiss, duck!" Everything she said had a tone of rich, sad, understanding love. Together she and his father used to smile at the rest of the family for being 'doughy'. They were both quick, with the best looks as well. Granville's father was spellbound by her like everybody else, though they'd grown up together, and a dreaming look came into his eyes when he said 'old May'. She used to make lavish suppers, and once he heard his mother ask as they were going back home, "Where the devil does old May get the money to do all that?" His father said she'd always been the same. She'd got the knack!

May would swing him up in the air when he was a baby so that he caught his breath, then hold him above her and shout, "He belongs to May, doesn't he, the little bugger, eh? Eh?", her eyes flashing. Outside, dark smoke would drift across the street from a shunting yard round the corner. Men would pass in heavy boots, from work, with silver chokers round their necks. Then she would turn and shout at one of his cousins, "Now put that bloody iron down!" or "For Christ's sake leave off, I'll put my hand round your mouth in a minute!" The irons were on the stove and

her two sons used to pick them up when they were feeling devilish, and menace people with them. Yet her voice seemed to encourage them.

By the kerb there were carts with their shafts up, and in the next street there were stables for the horses. May's eldest son worked on a cart when he was old enough and sold vegetables. His legs were weak when he was a child and he had to wear iron struts. He was big-boned, with a bulbous nose and a rather adenoid way of speaking, and he was always getting into trouble. He was clumsy and lanky. His father used to take him into the back-yard and give him a good hiding with his belt, and come back smiling. All the children had pale, sunken faces but clear and quick eyes. The beatings had no effect on him and he slouched about insolently when they were over. May used to say between her teeth, "That boy's a proper little sod!"

The last time Granville saw May was when he was about sixteen, in Abbott's Road. She'd come on a visit and he went downstairs with his mother and father to see her off. The Saturday evening visits had stopped by that time. It was a summer evening and she was wearing a light hat and a print dress, rather loose and flowery. He could still remember watching her back as she walked slowly away from them down the street after saying good-bye. She had an easy, soft walk. Only it was a little stiffer now, compared with her young days. And as if she knew what they were thinking she stopped and turned round to them with a smile, sad and at the same time jaunty. Her cheeks were smooth and slightly flushed, as always. Her eyes had a steady, dark gleam and there were wisps of light brown hair over her brow. And she said, putting her hand lightly on her hip, "Not too bad, is she?" Then she walked on and didn't turn round again.

Her favourite swear-word was 'bleed'n'. "Mind my bleed'n corns!"

she would cry if one of the children came too near. This word had a vicious, forbidden sound to his ears. His mother forbade its use at Abbott's Road and only said it herself, shyly, when she was with May. She would try to loosen up in May's company. She would lean forward and talk with narrowed eyes, using all the swear-words she could think of. "I said to her, I said, now don't you come your sodding larks with me," she would murmur. She had a delicacy that was crushed when she used these words deliberately. She needed to be angry, but in May it was an understood manner of speech. It ran in the family, perhaps, for his father was the same. He was fond of the words 'shit-house', applied to people. "He's a real shit-house," he would say during one of his dockyard stories, and his mother would lower her eyes and murmur reprovingly, "All right, King George's dock ..." At other times she would say, "That's enough, Bethnel Green!" His father would look at her with his mouth open and his eyes bewildered, as if unconscious of what he'd said.

Sometimes May would talk about her husband. "I do love my Sid," she would say. "He's lovely! I don't know what I'd do without that bugger!" And, "Sid does me good!" They never seemed to quarrel. Sid was a lean, handsome man, not unlike Granville's father to look at, and on Saturday nights he set out to get as drunk as he could. They would all start drinking at the pub, with the children waiting outside eating potato-crisps and sipping ginger beer. Then at closing time everybody would pour out, stumbling and singing. There would be groups of people all along the road, rolling and bumping into each other. Sid would always bring some more beer home with him, in bottles. The men would fall about, leaning over the women and shouting. Usually Sid looked for someone "to take into the yard". He always liked a fight with bare fists when he was

drunk and he would choose one of the men who might be getting 'nasty'. Together they would go out and there would be sounds of scuffling from the yard, and dull blows. Granville and his sister would cling to their mother, trembling. Then Uncle Sid would come back, smiling as he did after beating his son, and say, "He's out!" He was always the victor and once or twice left the other man quite unconscious in the yard. After a time the other man would return with a bleeding nose or a black eye, sober.

May had a daughter called Eve, who was a little older than Granville and was a special friend of his sister. May always called her 'young Eve', in the same lingering way as she talked about her husband. From the earliest times May and Eve went shopping and did the housework together, and were allies in everything. There was the same softness in Eve as in her mother, and one could even see in her, as a child, some of the jauntiness as well. She protected her mother against the boys in the family and hated Bethnel Green in the same spirit as Granville's mother did. She had the same kind of delicacy in her, too. She never swore like the others and had a gracious, quiet manner. On Saturday nights she would lay the supper in the kitchen and see the youngest children to bed. Now and then someone would ask, "Where's young Eve?" There was a great deal of sadness in her eyes, and she gazed at things for a long time as if trying to see their meaning. She was a little ashamed of her lolling brothers, who said 'bu'er' instead of 'butter'. Granville's mother used to imitate them on the way home from Bethnel Green sometimes: "'Bu'er, bu'er, wa'er, wa'er!' Those boys are proper gentlemen, aren't they?"

Annt May had a special game for the boys of the family, to chase them round the room and make a sudden dive for their trousers, to catch their 'little winkles'. Then she would hold up her hand, showing them

her thumb sticking out between her fingers, and cry, "I got it! I got it!" And the boys always looked down at their trousers, half-believing. This game excited him. One evening, without any consciousness of what he was doing, in the passage-way near the door, he suddenly stopped while she was chasing him and turned round to face her as if to say, 'You needn't chase me, it's yours for the asking!' She stopped, too, and raised herself up slowly, gazing at him with a slowly dawning expression; then a look of utter disgust came into her eyes, the only one he ever saw, and she walked slowly away.

Eve was the only one of the family he'd seen since the war. She lived near Wimbledon now, in a suburb like the U.K. Compound in Basrah, with a husband and four children. Her cheeks were rosy now and she was quite plump. Much of the sadness had gone out of her eyes but they still had a baffled, searching look. Aunt May had died some years before, suddenly. Whenever Granville talked to Eve he saw flashes of her mother's face in her and almost gasped. There was the old rich tone, and the jauntiness. It was in the way she lifted up her head sometimes, smiling, with bright eyes, when she made a joke or shouted at her children, seeming to encourage them just as her mother did. Her children were quiet and well cared for, with her rosy look. She'd coolly made it the ambition of her life to get May and the rest of the family out of Bethnel Green, and she'd succeeded. The 1939 war gave her the chance, when the bombing got really bad. She levered them slowly out of the district they loved, from the tiny dark house they belonged to. By that time she and her father were earning decent money and she found the Wimbledon house. It was a detached house and nobody could imagine May living there. But she loved it and even started looking after the garden. After her death Sid

moved away and Eve was now alone with her own family. She had a spotlessly clean home, with nice furniture, not at all suburban in taste.

Eve turned to him once when he went over for tea and said, "Do you know, I can't help feeling swindled with life? Do you know what I mean? I feel I've missed something - been swindled out of it! Perhaps I'm just getting old!" May's shadow, jaunty and sad at the same time, came into her face for a moment. "Then I think it might have been the war. But I don't know ---! I've got everything I want but I'm not satisfied and I don't know what it is!"

Her husband said he thought it was the war. It had taken five years off people's lives, he said. But she wasn't satisfied with this. Granville thought he understood her. But her husband denied it. They had everything they wanted, he said, and they must be grateful; there were other people in the world, many of them, less fortunate than they were!

"But I wasn't thinking about other people," Eve said quietly. "I was thinking about myself! And I'm sorry to say it I don't care about other people! We're always being told about other people, it seems." And she gave her husband a sharp look.

At Tatlin Broadway there were two cinemas, one of them like a huge, gilt palace inside with thick twirling columns and an organ that came out of the ground. Sometimes there was a stage show as well, and once even a circus. He used to be taken there once a month or so, usually on Saturday afternoons for the one o'clock performance. But sometimes his mother would take him and his sister to the other less grandiose cinema on a week-day; the fact that it wasn't huge and gilt like the other one seemed to affect the film and made it less convincing for him.

Once when he was about thirteen his father came home helplessly drunk, on a Friday night after he'd been paid. He had to crawl up the stairs and made a frightful clattering noise. It was two or three hours after his usual time and Granville and his sister were already in bed. They heard their mother rush down from the back-room and shout from the top of the stairs, "God Christ almighty, look at this!" Then she said in a scolding voice that sent a shiver down their spines, "Come on! Come on!", and more quietly, "What the devil have you been up to?" They'd never heard her speak to their father like this before --- just as if he were a child! And so she went on while he made a grotesque mumbling noise, trying to keep his balance on the stairs and pulling the rods out. "Look what you're doing!" she cried. "Why, you rotten drunken bugger!" But at the same time her voice was mild, with pity and a touch of rapt interest. "You ought to be damned-well ashamed of yourself!" Then one of Granville's brothers came out and helped him up, saying quietly, "Come on, dad, that's all right." He wasn't a bit alarmed and after that their mother said little. She only murmured, "I don't know, I don't know!" to herself while their brother hurried up and down the corridor getting hot water and a face-flannel, after they'd got him on to a bed. Neither Granville nor his sister dared get up. They only sat quite still on their beds staring before them, their mouths open, nudging each other when there was a new sound. They heard their mother say briskly in the bedroom, "Turn over! It serves you damned-well right!" and their brother murmured, "That's all right, mum, leave him alone now."

Apparently, his face was covered with blood because his glasses had been smashed. There were still tiny pieces of glass embedded in his forehead and their brother spent a long time getting them out, with his usual

patience and kindly good will, while his father snored. "He's just had a good time, that's all," they heard him tell their mother. The next day they found out that he'd fallen down the whole length of the stairs at Tatlin Road station; these ~~stairs~~ were very steep, and were edged with little steel studs. He'd landed on the asphalt at the bottom and said that as far as he could remember he'd slept there for some time. Anyway, no one had helped him up and he'd had to crawl home on all fours --- "keeping to the wall of course," he said. He waited whenever he had a road to cross, looking left and right as the safety-first posters advised. His knees were cut and his trousers torn. "It was that damned cider did it!" he said. The next morning, it being Saturday, he brought tea round to everybody. Granville took his in silence and didn't say good morning; this was about the time when his horror of Abbott's Road was beginning. His sister asked quietly, "How do you feel, dad?" for there were scars and a graze on the upper part of his face. Then Granville regretted not saying hullo and laughed. But their father was ashamed, like a child. He went about the house quietly and cooked a huge breakfast of sausages, eggs, tomatoes, bacon and fried bread for them all. In a way the episode was a fling into the old life, which he never repeated again; or perhaps it was only the cider!

The visits to Bethnel Green gradually stopped. Now and then they went back into the mystery of the old life. He remembered being taken to a men's club and seeing music-hall turns on a tiny stage; the room was tall and Victorian with a massive fire-place, and the ceiling had elaborate plaster-work all over it. Everybody joined in the songs that always made him feel say --- "Hold your hand out, you naughty boy!", "My old man said foller the gan!" and "Who were you with, last night?" They were

rollicking and generous, with such unbearable tenderness and sweetness in them. The gas-lamps had gaudy tasselled shades with beads, and the room had a hot, dark, solid feeling.

Every night when they went to bed Granville's mother took him and his sister to her lap, standing by the bed while they kneeled on it, leaning against her, and said the Lord's prayer in a soft voice, with another little prayer that went, 'God bless mummy and daddy, uncles and aunties, soldiers and sailors, tinkers and tailors, gran'mas and gran'dads.' The God she spoke to seemed a different God from the one in church. This God in her prayer was deep in the past, of enormous volume like the sun or the wind or the dawn, with unlimited patience and pity, looking after everything in a kindly way.

When his father talked about the docks, they also seemed far in the past, though he might have been there only an hour before. He would talk about the biting winds that came down the river past King George's wharf, and the grimy brick walls of Silvertown, and the swaying tram that took him through Blackwell tunnel soon after dawn every day, while the sky was heavy with smoke and river-mist. He would stand at the back door for a moment after he got up in the morning, gazing into the blackness of the garden that was like a great beast outside. His movements as he made tea and put scalding water into his shaving bowl all had something devout about them, with an extraordinary relish and glow. He would stand by the kitchen table with his cup of tea, his eyes lost as he blew the steam away before each sip, making a loud sucking noise of which he was unaware. Then there was the brisk walk down to the trams and the swaying voyage through the dim, mysterious streets of West Ham and Plaistow and Canning Town, with people just stirring about, yawning and stamping their feet,

muffled up.

His mother always talked about the old days in a grudging numbed way. "Some people talk about the good old days," she would say, "not me!" But when she talked about her father, whose nickname had been 'the gent', there was a sing-song richness in her voice that reminded him of Aunt May.

She had a dream of what it was like to be rich. It was a compound of all the ordinary things whose taste and touch were cosy --- the table-cloth that went on for tea, the bread-and-cheese and pickles at bed-time, the sound of the crowds at the Tatlin dog-track on Thursday evenings like a vast sigh drifting across the back-gardens, the crackling of Guy Fawkes fires on the Fifth of November, the fillets of plaice she sometimes brought in for tea as a special treat, the front-room which was used on Sundays when there were visitors with its deep armchairs and settee and bowl of nuts on the table while the street lay silent outside and the sound of the muffin-man with his bell came through the window closer and closer. Richness was the accumulation of all those little moments into one long pause without any more worrying or skimping. She couldn't believe that rich people had any worries; some people had it perfect! That was her dream and she stuck to it grimly. Money solved everything.

In the old days, she said, people were 'just goods and chattels'. You never dared to raise your voice against the 'higher-ups', she said. You had to bow down to nearly everybody - to your own parents, to policemen, to shop-keepers, even to well-dressed passers-by in the street! Every little pleasure was a privilege in those days! A privilege to be employed at half-a-crown a week! She'd been sent out to work at the age of twelve,

working as a kitchen-scrivvy, and her mother had waited at the corner every Friday night to take her half-a-crown.

Granville was taken to see his maternal grandmother a short time before she died, and remembered a tall, gloomy and yet awesome and fascinating room full of knick-knacks and velvet curtains and lacework. She wouldn't part with her money and died on it, they said. One of the brothers called Charlie, a regular in the army, whom Granville's mother called 'doughy', cut the money out of her mattress a few hours after she died and went oversea back to his unit with it. Nobody knew how much there was but it was said between fifty and a hundred pounds, quite a tidy little sum for those days. Other people said that the old girl couldn't have saved so much because 'the gent' liked his drop too much. Every Friday night when the money was in his pocket the gent used to leave the house in a top hat, with a smart cane in his hand, tall and impeccably dressed, and would return after midnight 'as drunk as a fiddler's bitch'; the children would hear him pass their door in his socks. He never got a speck of dirt on his evening clothes, it was said. Like Granville's father he used to work at King George's Dock; when he was drunk he called dockers 'a lot of bloody riff-raff and bugger the lot of them!' He was greatly loved at his work and it was said that he could bring barges into dock like a magician. At the end of his life he was a tug-man and the rough work, which exposed him to river-mists and gof, killed him. 9

Granville's mather was a slim, good-looking man with smooth, dark hair. He loved the huge elms that swayed with the wind in the Abbott's Road back-gardens, and said he'd like a forest full of them outside the window; he used to lean on the window-sill gazing out on summer evenings. Other people's gardens were always mysterious; some were well cared-for and

others like tropical scrub: Some had an unknowable, dark look because their owners were unknown. These gardens were most exciting on Guy Fawkes night when tall bon-fires were lit and fireworks whizzed into the air, lighting up the still trees, and sparks drifted about, and silver St. Catherine's Wheels hissed and whirled round and round while all the windows glittered and there was the sound of children's voices and repeated crashes and smart bangs and pops that were like a man frantically beating on drums in the sky! Effigies of Guy Fawkes with a wide-brimmed black hat, his jacket swollen out like a pumpkin, were raised up and then let fall with a last reclining movement into the flames, which always made him catch his breath.

Granville's father only had to think about flowers at night to fall asleep. Sometimes on the tram-journey to work he would start planning next year's garden in his mind. "I think of all the colours," he would say, "and I feel all right!" He was against picking flowers for the house and said the garden was a place for flowers to life and breathe in. Half-way up Tatlin Road, opposite the orphanage grounds, he had an allotment for vegetables, one of many little narrow plots covering a whole field that always looked untidy and bleak. In the summer Granville and his sister would go up and help him with the lettuces and radishes for Sunday tea. They would bring everything back in a wheelbarrow. Sometimes Granville lay in the sun with his eyes closed, at the side of the allotment where there was a grassy path, listening to the oak-trees swaying in the breeze on the other side of the road and imagining himself in hilly, spacious country far from London with the sea glittering near by. He connected the countryside with summer weather and never thought of it otherwise.

There was a bitter scrape for money at one time, during the Depression; his father was laid off at the docks. Strangely, his mother stopped grumbling about money as she usually did, and was mute and pale instead. She was rigid with an old fear that chilled her bones and plunged her in doom and shame. There was a superstitious horror of unemployment in Abbott's Road, and while this period lasted they got no visits from the neighbours at all. Unemployment was like smallpox or fever.

Uncle Sid, May's husband, said that the Granvilles were fools to keep their children at school so long. "I'd give them education!" he said in a vehement way. "They won't thank you for it! They'll only turn up their noses at you!" His parents were quiet and firm. They listened, and his mother nodded her head in agreement. But in his father's eyes there was a gleaming, distant look, almost smiling, impervious to Sid's arguments.

But things got better just before the war; the old pinched feeling went. His two brothers were now at work; and the whole district round Abbott's Road seemed to share the bell-being. The district had a life quite its own: the lending library glowed cosily in the evenings, and sometimes the street-lamps gave the impression with their intimate twinkle of numberless exciting things about to happen. Saturday evening was the most exciting, before a dance: his father would hurry up and down the corridor asking for his cuff-links or a new starched collar, while his mother sat quietly in the bedroom before the mirror powdering herself with only a petticoat on, queenly and still. And this bustle gave everything a luscious, thriving look, especially in the back-room where the fire blazed white and the tasselled lamp-shade cast a shrouded light over the

table. At the school where the dance was held there would be ham-sandwiches, cakes and lemonade in one of the class-rooms, and someone would be sprinkling french chalk on the floor when they arrived, and the women in the cloak-room would be talking and laughing in undertones, opening and closing their hand-bags with a sharp clicking noise in the silence before the band started. The hall would look bare and seem to be holding its breath, with chairs along each wall. Once his father was Master of Ceremonies, and there was nearly chaos. He got the Paul Jones, the 'spot' and Sir Roger de Coverley mixed up in some way, and in the raffle the serial-numbers of the tickets in the hat were different from those he'd sold to the audience. But it was much more comic than an ordinary evening and the band stood him three pints of best winter ale in the pub opposite during the interval, and he could hardly keep to his feet for the rest of the evening. He preferred to watch people, his eyes glowing, with a smile from ear to ear, than arrange things.

CHAPTER 9.

Granville's horror of Abbott's Road grew like a ghost over his life, from outside, independent of him. It happened after he left the junior school at the bottom of the street; he stopped looking at Abbott's Road as his natural home. In a few years he was quite torn out of it and couldn't go back: his consciousness was changed for good.

It wasn't what he'd expected at all. When he was eleven he took his scholarship to the secondary school eagerly, thinking it would be much like the school at the bottom of the road, where you were always happy more or less. He took the exam in a dream. He wrote an essay about snakes and what lovely colours they had, though he'd never seen one. And a few weeks later, at prayers, in the hall with tall windows at one end and a parquet floor, the headmaster read out a list of those who had passed and gave them permission to run home at once and tell their mothers. It was a clear, wintry, sun-lit day and everything looked extraordinarily wide-open to the sky. Sitting on the floor of the hall listening to the names being read out slowly and clearly he had the impression of a great flash when the letter G arrived and then, after two or three other names, he heard 'Philip Granville'. The flash seemed to extend, in an instant, across his whole future life, that was now quite changed.

When he got home with the news his mother had just finished cleaning the stairs and the front door was open. He'd run all the way, along the kerb with one foot on and one foot off, bouncing up and down

with happiness. He called up from the door, "Mum! I won a scholarship!" She turned slowly at the top of the stairs and a long time passed while she gazed down at him in silence, and then she murmured almost in a whisper, "Oh, my son, you have ... That's a good boy! Come upstairs and let me give you a kiss." And he saw tears beginning to fall down her face.

Then, afterwards, he became aware of Abbott's Road as a locality for the first time, apart from him. The glow went out. It became physical: there were just roofs, tram-lines, pavements like a hard picture in front of him! A frightful emptiness and drought fell on his life.

The higher school was called a 'public day school', which meant it wasn't a real public school but an imitation. And this was the whole atmosphere, of imitation; conducted by people who didn't know the original, either. A 'gentleman' was someone who never said anything spontaneous or rash.

He was miserable as he'd never been before in his life and never was again. A numbing wretchedness of spirit persisted from hour to hour every day under the eyes of adults who rarely vouchsafed a glimpse of their humanity, though there were one or two exceptions --- poor devils who'd sold their lives to this little fake-castle of ignorance! It was more an ignorance of the possible graciousness in life than lack of book-learning, though this was mostly faked, too. Learning was dished-up in the style of high-class goods not to be touched easily by the sons of Bethnel Green, Mile End, Stepney and Walthamstow, of whom the school consisted. The moment he got there he felt the shadow of a kind or original sin: it was the street where he was born -- a matter of 'background'. That word had an unpleasant ring, rather like syphilis. And this gradually had to be wiped out and the manners associated with it

gradually replaced by an air of half-sneering irony. Those who got on best were the boys who locked everything inside them and spoke staccato little sentences like pettets being spat out of their mouths; also they had to play sports, though with ascetic grimness --- muddy and hard-eyed; even on the playing field relish wasn't allowed. Nothing 'soft'! In the summer there was a choice of two sports, rowing or cricket. Rowing was frowned-on, perhaps because of the grace a boat had when it skimmed through the water, like a delicate sheath of wood. The headmaster was a quiet, charming man who gave the impression of smothering his real life behind pale, fixed lips; he glanced about him nervously and sometimes yelled at the top of his voice, between the same fixed lips, as he swept through the corridors in the lunch-hour, pencil in hand, his gown flowing behind him. He had a hard job grooming the sons of working people into class-habits that weren't even the best class-habits!

The headmaster always wanted to 'raise the tone', as he called it. Straw boaters were worn in the summer. There were Field Days, Old Boys' Dinners and House meetings every Friday evening after school, and houses called 'Mafeking' or 'Punjab'. There was a dining hall, a tuck shop, a chapel with an organ, and once, before the 1914 war, there had even been a few boarders. The grounds and the school itself, which was Victorian gothic, red brick, with ivy over the front and mullioned windows, were quite pleasant. Sometimes they had the air, especially in the evening, with the tall trees and bright green lawns, of being in the country and of being really old. The foundation of the school reached back to Tudor times and this was made much of by the headmaster. In a way, the boys had to make up for the social disappointments of the teachers.

He lost his confidence. He saw his mother and father as some of

his teachers might see them. The back-room at Abbott's Road seemed tiny and stifled him. He was bored. The old life was small and uneventful. Nothing happened in the street; he was always waiting for something new to happen; a nervous concept of life as on a rapidly moving belt of time was being implanted in him. He couldn't read a sentence in a book without his mind wandering. He'd been given a mind, but it did none of the things education required it to do. It spent most of its time thinking about women. Enjoyment was suspect in any case --- one really had to do better than enjoying books!

Abbott's Road was now a kind of prison-yard for him. 'Town' was the centre of London where everything important went on. In his own district nothing counted. What people said and what they did hadn't the slightest influence. The newspapers decided everything; they came to Abbott's Road from outside, like the radio. Everything came from outside, informing one about the real state of things! But education had elected him to a new position --- supposedly, at any rate: he was now among those who could influence matters! Except that nobody, including himself, really thought so.

He was always being criticised at school for his accent. He was asked how verse could be recited in such a voice. He started having dreams that his real voice broke through his genteel voice and talked obscenities which showed everybody where he 'came from'. Everything was now part of a map in his consciousness, even his own existence and his own body. He watched life from outside, in stillness. There was no further movement in his life. He was bleeding for the touch of another creature; there was no one he could speak to any more, after all. ~~The~~ language of his mother and father was foreign. Everybody in the district

was a foreigner. He started to fear going outside the door. The district was like a huge monument with nothing growing in it --- terribly hard, made of concrete and slate, angular, without a soft curve anywhere. His whole spirit sank down and everyday was like the opening of a severe cross-examination. This was so in term-time; during the holidays there were a few pleasant and even happy days as before. He had a growing sense of unworthiness and wrong-doing. He felt he hadn't the slightest human status. He blushed helplessly in front of people and stood paralysed and speechless with fear, quite giddy, his eyes staring out of his head. These were some of the glorious effects of education, which the middle classes were holding up as a passport to health and joy!

Not that there was any slave-driving at the school. It was quite liberal, in fact. There was an up-to-date theatre with the best stage equipment. Russian was taught, before most schools started it. The caning was moderate, but energetic when it happened. One was 'taken to the bathroom' for a caning. The master ran the length of the bathroom to get a decent momentum. But this practice was dying out. Granville had it only once, and went about with four cuts across his arse for a week afterwards. On the whole, masters shrank from doing it. The atmosphere was kindly; or rather, it was hesitant, as if nobody was quite sure of his authority.

His mind was a complete mess. He had no idea what they were trying to teach him! All he got was the names of things! In history there was the divine right of kings, mercantilism, the rotten boroughs, the balance of power, the rise of nationalism, electoral reform, the factory acts, the Irish question, all in one big dirty heap! Not a face, not a human creature to be seen! Well, Henry VIII and Elizabeth were allowed faces --

but that was from his first school. Now they were squashed under a Star Chamber --- he never knew what the devil that was! He got all the Jameses mixed up. And the word 'Jacobean' --- that beat every other word in the curriculum! It was so like 'Jacobin', which seemed to mean something absolutely different, even French! There was also 'Jacobite'. By association with the French word 'Jacobin', and because of an image that persisted in his mind of James II escaping from England without his trousers on, having just thrown the Great Seal (whatever that was) in the river Thames, he thought sansculottes were the king's supporters, namely, Jacobites --- a bizarre mixture!

He even had the sansculottes fight a pitched battle --- without their trousers of course, but perhaps they wore kilts --- at Killiecrankie against William and Mary. There was another James called the Pretender but that was best left alone. A sentence he found, 'the grace and elegance of the Jacobean', had him baffled for over five years. He couldn't see why bloodthirsty French radicals should be called graceful and elegant.

But the name that introduced our epoch --- ah, that was something! The Industrial Revolution! Like a huge cloud so vague and dark that you could say what you liked about it and it was luck if you were right or not. That name gave off thousands of others like a heap of rotten garbage proliferating with white worms. Also there was a new master. He was going to teach history the modern way! No more kings and queens and prime ministers --- the people had to be studied, the lives of ordinary people! But that was even worse! They turned into even longer names, such as Wage Levels, Mortality Rates, Sanitation and Living Conditions! And, of course, the Industrial Revolution wasn't really a revolution.

But of course not? Did you think that in our high-class school we actually said what we mean? Oh, no! It was a 'process'. That was the name you used if you wanted to be really superior --- and under it, quite inexplicably, there was a little crowd of men, called Arkwright, Watt, Murdock, Stephenson, jumbled up with spinning jennies, the Stockton-Darlington line, a 'Rocket', and God knows what else! Then there were the 'Factors'. These were the worst of all! When you heard that word you knew there'd be a list a mile long. The 'Factors' were Speenhamland (but of course! this was so obvious that he never knew what it was!), Cottage Craftsmen, Turnpike Roads, Canals, Coal and the Steam Engine! As for the spinning jenny he didn't even know it was connected with yarn or cloth in any way. It was just --- well, the spinning jenny, you know! Years later, by accident, he opened a child's encyclopedia and read that the wife of a poor weaver had one day dropped her spinning wheel on the floor and her husband had noticed how it spun round and round as it lay there, which gave him the idea of the first spinning machine; and the wife's name was Jenny! Simple! But not if you're a bit of a cut above everybody else, of course you don't tell that sort of thing! And Arkwright had been a hairdresser! When he heard this he asked himself with astonishment how a hairdresser had been allowed in such an important-sounding list of Factors! A hairdresser --- started the Industrial Revolution!

No wonder he felt he was floating above life all the time instead of learning about it. He began to get a sense of the world not as men and women and trees and things like that but a system of names held high above real life. First the system, then the things themselves! Even his mother and father changed --- they were now little units in a vast 'working class'.

It seemed that all life was only an example of something higher that had no taste, no sound, no heart and no face. And a chill grew in him. It was living in a world of ghosts. His mother and father gradually began to seem a bit childish and innocent in his eyes, and they felt this new attitude in him. They lived so deeply and wholly in the street where he was born that he now seemed --- in his knowledge of all the other streets that existed, and the map of names that covered them all--- far in advance of them! His eyes had been opened! He could see the whole map on which they were only a tiny mark! At the same time he saw that they were better people than himself; better than his teachers, too. A frightful neutral misery came into his life.

He had the impression even at the time that he wasn't learning to think at all, only how to think in a certain way; and he had an inkling that perhaps this wasn't the way people had thought in the past or a natural way of thinking at any time. It was special in some way. He felt he'd inherited one world through his birth and another one through his education; and they were different from each other to the point of requiring entirely new ways of perceiving, even of smelling, seeing and hearing.

There was only one thing of interest at school - masturbation, It was the great school sport.- There was no need to take an examination in it; everybody would have passed with honours, anyway. But it was still competitive. A team was started once in which prizes were given for the ~~w~~uickest orgasm --- self-abuse to start from the stop-watch. It was funny to hear the headmaster talk about 'raising the tone' to a stupendous male whorehouse where a brisk and noisy trade went on all day. Occasionally the staff issued a warning about 'bull-fighting', a euphemism for 'ball-

fighting', in which a group of boys would tear someone's trousers off and toss him off, watching his struggles turn into grateful acquiescence. One boy, a vast rugger-playing 'man', said there was nothing better than a pound of liver nailed to the wall for the pleasures of a wife. He did it every evening and went round to the butcher's every week to get his 'pound of pleasure'.

Sex was the only pleasure school left intact. It was the only little frail power and dignity left to you. Otherwise you were just a poor, pale, wilted thing crammed with facts. You didn't have to learn it. It was something you could actually do yourself, without having some pot-faced misery telling you you needed more style! You could do it with your own hands!

There were a few serious 'marriages' at school: a couple would stay together and have an agreement about being faithful to each other. These affairs seemed to have more passion and tenderness than one saw later in life. One famous 'marriage' took place while he was at school between a good-looking boy nicknamed Strumpelpeter, because of his shock of blond hair, and another called 'the Gordian knob' because his real name was Knott and he was reticent and difficult to fathom. These nicknames ran through the school and lasted a certain time. One master, a shy, worried-looking man, was nicknamed 'The Hand' because when he called out a boy to his desk to run through an essay he always put his hand up his trousers and fondled his balls. Another, the geography man, was called 'The Kipper' because he liked to organise camping holidays and would ask any boy he had his eye on to 'kip down' next to him at night.

Boys with real homosexual appetites often did well at their work. They didn't ache to get away home as the others did; they lingered in the

changing-rooms and the dining hall afterwards, watching their fellow-voluptuaries walk by. They lived in an atmosphere of Latin primers and glowing Victorian rooms with coloured shields on the mantelpiece, and gas-fires at dusk when there was extra study, and the smell of stale tea in the evening from the kitchens. They had everything they wanted. But Granville was among the majority whose sexual pleasures at school were only vicarious, and usually solitary. Only when a local girl's school paid a courtesy visit did he come to life: he poured a cup of hot tea down the headmaster's wife's back in his nervousness and blushed so much that his face tingled afterwards. His ears were still bright red when he woke up next morning. He tripped over people's feet, grinned sheepishly and gawped at the girls, completely speechless.

His failing matriculation was the first real blow. There'd been hopes that he might go to a university, but failing matric put the kibosh on that! He was too shy even to walk along the street properly and he spent hours trying to pluck up the courage just to leave the house. He blushed and faltered if a passer-by happened to throw him a glance. The bus-rides to school were a real torture. He spent five years at school virtually listening for the bell at the end of each lesson.

His only other pleasure was rebellion. He was known at school as a 'fire-eater' and 'against' almost everything. He hated England and he hated the Church. Those were his two platforms. One term-report ended with the words, 'Lack of patriotism is not enough.' It stung him because it was true; the cut went home.

He turned to music. He first listened to one or two records his brothers brought home, then he started going to concerts. Music always made him feel calm and resolved afterwards. He began to need it like

fresh air --- to keep him alive!

He started having what he called giddy fits. He couldn't describe them because they weren't physical. But they had physical effects. They always started when he was alone. He might be sitting in a chair reading, then slowly he would seem to lose connection with the things round him and would go into a state where his self would actually seem to disappear and his mind float high above his body. He banged things furiously to bring himself back. Or he shouted for the people downstairs. The sight of a person would restore him to life again at once.

Even to his parents and his brothers and sister he seemed a stranger now. They looked at him in a puzzled way. The fun he'd always had with his sister stopped. He gave her the same look of loneliness that he gave everyone else.

He went to Cambridge to see his brother and this had a devastating effect on him. For the first time he actually came face to face with that other world he'd dreamed about so much! So his vision of it was true! It did abound with grace and love, just as his brother had always promised.

He loved the narrow cobbled side-streets and walked along King's Parade again and again. There was nothing to remind him of Abbott's Road. Not one grimy wall! The lawns were neatly kept --- extraordinarily bright! And the quadrangles of the colleges, enclosed and utterly quiet with some of the windows glowing warmly and casting a light on to the cobbles below, were like a dream he'd always had but never been able to define! He lived in one of these rooms on the second floor --- they were the guests' rooms --- and spent hours sitting over the fire imagining himself an undergraduate. While his brother went to lectures he walked by the river behind the

colleges where everything was laid out like a superb garden and nothing seemed to move, even, from a distance, the river, shining like glass between the lawns. The dons had quiet and reflective faces as he'd always imagined the faces of those who belonged to the other world! Every time he passed one of them he tried to make his own features as gentle and lost as possible. He imagined them living magnificent lives with everything they said and thought subtle and quiet, their manners always perfect. They understood all thoughts! No delicacy escaped them. It was as much as he could do to speak if one of them addressed him!

His brother's college had a fountain in the middle of the front quadrangle, and the trees near the river were just visible over the roofs. The scout built him a big fire every evening when he came in, and he took tea in his armchair, gazing across at the latticed window, a tremendous luxury. The room, too, was a dream. It was small with a low ceiling and heavy beams, at the top of a very narrow wooden staircase. An arched window overlooked the quadrangle, tiny and high in the wall so that little light came through and the room was always mysterious. By the door there was a bookcase and near it an ink-stained desk. The carpet was worn but thick, and there were two great armchairs and a settee. He could think of nothing more wonderful and wanted to stay in the room all his life! It was specially marvellous on the second morning when he woke up and found bright sunlight streaming through the window on to the carpet so that everything glittered and the whole city outside seemed to exist inside a kind of sparkling eternity and to promise extraordinary happenings during the day. The traffic had a special sound in the distance and he felt sure, by a peculiar premonition, that a room like this would one day be his.

He imagined sitting in hall at dinner in the evening with a gown over his shoulders, and going back to his room afterwards with a friend and sitting talking over the fire all through the night, surrounded by books and papers, his legs stretched out; they would make tea or cocoa in the wooden corridor outside, where the gas-ring was, and make quiet jokes while the rest of the college slept. He would think about books all day, and the sun would come glittering through the window; there would never be a painful thought in his life again!

There was a feeling in him he'd never be able to shake off, perhaps --- that he couldn't understand things that came easily to other people! He watched the other boys in hall and wondered how they could behave so confidently, so much as if the world was comprehensible! He had to work harder than anybody else, so he thought --- because he could understand less!

He was told by his history teacher at school that he must stop 'flying too high' in his essays. When he talked --- when something interested him --- he ran on hotly, in the manner of Abbott's Road. But that wouldn't do for school! You had to be neat and cool. So he tried to write bluntly and to cut his feelings as short as possible. To achieve the history teacher's coolness, which was only mediocrity, he distorted and damaged the thing that was best in him. At the same time he knew this wasn't natural or good. He began to find that when he wrote palely, with only a small part of his energies, he got good marks. So he went through all his essays afterwards cutting out the strong and direct-sounding words and putting hesitant ones in, like 'on the whole' and 'so to speak' and 'perhaps' and 'rather' and 'quite' and 'taking all in all'. He imitated what he thought was the necessary cool style. It felt like

blasphemy and self-betrayal.

But while he was sure something was wrong, he knew no other way of learning. And he was influenced by his school enough not to be able to credit anyone he read about with a real life like his own. If he learned the word accidie or a phrase like the night of the soul from a potted history of the Middle Ages he would never connect them with the feelings of emptiness he himself had at Abbott's Road! So he barred himself from real learning before he started. The moment he set foot in the world outside Abbott's Road --- by going to high school --- a mental world started in him in which his own flesh and experience, not only his accent, were flung out of service: both were infra dig!

The attitude grew up in him at this time that his parents lacked full moral responsibility for their own actions. Compared with the people of the higher world, few of whom he'd met and none of whom he knew, they were blind to life and were moved along by it in an automatic way. The people higher up carried about a conscious moral map of the world in their heads and applied the principles deliberately, while his mother and father were vague as to what they stood for. They didn't approach other people with a deliberate air. They only did what seemed right to them, apparently in blindness, when the occasion arose: but before and after such an occasion their morality was hidden. And this didn't seem to him a real morality.

Definite perceptual differences began to grow up between him and them. He no longer had any idea what it felt like to be them. He couldn't imagine, for instance, what it was like to do the same work every day and live in the same street and not ache for something more. He knew

it was possible and he knew he'd felt the same in his early years: but he couldn't remember what it was like. How far did his parents have his insight into things? Had they a deeper or a lesser insight? For while he attributed a lesser moral consciousness to them, he also suspected that in their silence there was something deeper he could no longer grasp. They had a steadiness, both of them, which he knew he'd lost. He relied on their goodness every day as a constant and unchangeable factor. Yet he couldn't see it as full moral responsibility. They were 'blind'. And he had no insight into this blind world he had once occupied; he could only see his childhood like a wonderful landscape in the farthest distance.

The people from the other world looked at you clearly. That is, their eyes showed a quick sensitivity to everything you did. This he called having a delicate understanding. But in Abbott's Road there was always a certain vagueness in people's eyes. His own eyes had it, too, and he began to regret it while he was at school and to try to diminish it, by pinching his look into what he thought was a down-to-earth look. And there was this vagueness in his work, too, he thought --- the same thing -- 'flying high', as the history-teacher called it. One mustn't fly!

When he stood in front of someone from the higher world he felt acutely and morbidly aware of himself. More than this, he felt that hidden questions were being asked about him, in the silence of the other person's head. Deductions were being made from his appearance. These questions concerned his true personality, underneath --- what was his character like? was he clever? was he good? That was what he meant by their approaching people deliberately, unlike his parents! He was dazzled by this! It was a curiosity about other people which he'd never found in Abbott's Road. He thought of it as an acute appreciation of other people,

though at the same time he was disquieted by the process that took place inside him when he was faced with it. One thing was clear: the moment he stood in front of someone from the other world he knew, even without them speaking, that they were from that world! They created a tense psychological relation. It was even in the form of their eyes, which had a more scrutinising quality than those he was used to. He was aware of middle-class people as creatures entirely distinct from himself whom he recognised by the state of lowered energy, his best self neutralised, into which he at once fell. Their presence was like an invisible wave paralysing his actions, which he attributed to his not being worthy of their level of understanding.

Whenever he met a middle-class person he softened himself unduly, to the point of lisping. He hung back, smiling and nodding agreement. He was never at full strength in their company. Often, far from attributing 'roughness' to him, as he thought, they put him down as soft in the head. From about his twelfth year on it became his constant discipline to curb his real self. Only with intimate friends did he argue and shout and move about freely. But the moment someone from the other world appeared he went quiet. And all the time he smiled and lisped he thought they were divining his real feelings perfectly. He included in that other world everyone from the local priest to the conservative M.P. who called at the door at election-times. They were all 'nice'. There was something of the same awe in his mother's voice when she said someone was 'a real gentleman'. He was tongue-tied in their presence as if under a great beneficent light.

Once he saw a well-dressed man step out of a car with a young girl, apparently his daughter. "Now - are you all right for money, darling?"

the man asked. She was about to go into a gateway that might have been a school or convent. "Yes, thank you," the girl said, "I think so!" But the man looked into her eyes searchingly and then put his hand in his pocket. "I think you'd better have a bit more," he said, "to be on the safe side." It was such a safe world, so exclusive of the terrors that went on outside, and for a moment Granville felt included in the safety, so strong was the atmosphere round the car, the man and the girl! 'She can't feel naked to the world like I do,' he thought. What a marvellous life it must be, with someone above you who could provide for everything! How wonderful never to have to aspire beyond your own parents but think of them as the leaders of your world! Tears came to his eyes as he stood there. He always remembered the incident as a little image of the world beyond Abbott's Road in its beneficence and strength. There was also a touch of cruelty in its exclusiveness and it might well have been this that brought the tears to his eyes; but he wasn't conscious of it at the time.

His brother talked glowingly about everyone he knew at college. It seemed to Granville that his brother was invested with the same brightness as those other people. Granville couldn't imagine his brother being defeated or thwarted in any way. All the world outside Abbott's Road seemed to him a unity, of which his brother was now an accepted part. He, too, with luck would move into that world. It wasn't the world of a better class for him; on the contrary, he was full of socialism at this time. Just a world in which grace and love abounded!

The visit to Cambridge made Abbott's Road even worse for him. It was like the death of all the impulses. He was numb, void of anything

like desires: there seemed no chance for them, no way out! The silence over the streets was worse than ever before. The moment he was back everything became unreal for him, even the memory of Cambridge. The raw industrial light, glaring and yet never really sunny, made the streets look dead and forlorn. He watched pieces of paper drift along the gutter. He wandered about for hours, his hands in his pockets. Cambridge was now like all the other useless daydreams he'd had. He tried to read but the activity now seemed absurd. How could he ever get out of these streets now? He had no money in his pocket! A friend of his brother's at Cambridge had said to him, "Just leave! Just run away!" A nice suggestion with a couple of shillings in your pocket!

And getting a job would condemn him to the streets once and for all. He knew no one outside these streets he could go to.

His mother and father were silent at this time. They had no suggestions. They only knew their own world, not ways of getting into the other, except through school and scholarships. The Bethnel Green camp had won. His mother wanted him to get an office-job at least. But Granville refused. He would work with his hands, in the open air, or not at all! So it looked like the docks, where he would start at a lower wage even than his grandfather, who'd never known how to read or write!

CHAPTER 11.

He was conscripted into the army and there was almost no real goodbye between them. Pathetically, to appease her and bring her back he wrote her a letter from his barracks which he copied out carefully from several rough drafts, like an official document, in which he told her how he too looked forward to the socialist commonwealth and that she must never take him to mean anything contrary to that in his little jokes and games. He read it over and over to himself, marvelling at the neatness and soundness of his expressions. At the end he said he would do anything in his power while he was in the army to bring the wonderful day nearer when they would all be united! The inference being that if mankind was going to unite they might as well do the same, to make a job of it. He never got a reply. He didn't see her again.

He lived in a deadly soldier's world for several months, hollow and degraded. He went with one or two skirts available near the camp and in the end caught clap, a virulent type which the military doctor said was 'Spanish'. It meant hospital for a few weeks and then a return to hospital because there was an inexplicable, painful relapse. He took it as a moral punishment. Every time he felt desire and every time he dozed off at night a stabbing pain went through him like a reminder and woke him up with a start. He didn't sleep with another woman for a year, until they got to the organised brothels of Egypt and the Lebanon, which had first-aid stations near by where permanganate-of-potash douches were available: he

showed the other officers how to do it, with the professional touch. It meant inserting a narrow tube and then relaxing one's muscles until the red liquid flowed down into the bladder. The doctor in England explained it to him as 'having a pee backwards, if you see what I mean'.

But he was healthy and well-fed and too busy to think about the past. During his training he grew stronger and filled out remarkably. His muscles and nerves protected him: they hid everything. He was amazed one day in France after his battalion's first operation near Caen when a signaller remarked how calm he always seemed.

There was also the travelling. At Alexandria, where he was sent first, he gazed at everything with his mouth open as the ship drew in to harbour. He was fascinated by the dazzling sunlight, the sparkling blue water and the clear sky, like discovering a new world. The white houses were blinding in the sun. He watched Arabs unloading dates on to the harbour and was furious, with a mute rebellious rage, when he saw the English sergeant in charge of them shouting in a contemptuous way, "Come on, you bastards!", standing over them with his arms folded, beefy and sunburned. And the fellaheen nodded and scampered about obediently.

He realised in this new stark and brilliant world with the blinding sun how unprepared he was for life --- in his body, even his desires. Even with Kit there'd been no real body. They'd loved each other with an awe-struck, imaginative wonder. And their bodies had only followed this state of mind. They'd never created a tie it was impossible to break, of the body. When he was away from her he yearned to look in her eyes or kiss her; he yearned for the romping and affection, but seldom for the act itself. That had seemed a trifle, almost, compared with their great imaginative love.

One day on manoeuvres north of Damascus, near a dried-up, deserted wadi, he saw an old signpost pointing north up a dusty track with 'Basrah' written on it. It seemed unbelievable! Could he actually be near Basrah? He didn't know why the name had such a thrilling and fabulous sound for him. He stared at the post again and again. And in his mind there formed a thought half-way between a resolution and a prophecy, that he would one day visit the place; and he had a sense of excitement as though he'd actually started that wonderful journey.

During the fighting in the Ardennes he was caught in the open at dusk and had his leg nearly torn off by schrapnel. He was heading a platoon-attack and the others had to fall back because of machine-gun fire, leaving him there. He lay out all night in the middle of a field, numbed with cold, sometimes crying like a child, but in a strange way without grief as if only his face was doing it. The enemy machine-gun was on a fixed arc and every few minutes bullets would come spraying over him, though luckily he was lying in a deep plough-rut and had some protection. A bullet grazed a stud on one of his boots and went whining away. It was like lying there for a week. He was soaked to the skin and was too cold and numbed to move. After a time he began pleading with the bullets in a soft voice, like a child, whenever they came close --- "No, please --- please don't --- please!" But they had an extraordinary relentlessness and seemed to shoot over his head on the back of an enormous wind. The numbness grew from his leg and he was aware of caked blood on his fingers. The attack was completed next morning and the machine-gun knocked out. He was brought in on a stretcher and the doctor found there was no gangrene, by a miracle, probably because of the cold. The shock gradually wore off. The wound left two raw mauvish patches on his leg

which troubled him in a mild way when it was damp.

He dreamed about the wonderful England he would find when it was all over, and the friends he would see again, but when the war did end he found they'd dispersed and that in any case the old friendships were dead. Kit and her parents had left the village. Walsh had gone. Of course, there were no cadets. The Philbys were going to move; he had a much better job in the north of England. Granville had nothing to say to Jean. There was only an air of sadness. She had suffered, too. She'd lived two years without her husband. Granville blushed incessantly and faltered in his speech. He made a strange sight, hefty and fat in the neck, flushed with the outdoor life but with something unhealthy and disquieting even in this flush, from unsatisfied energies. At the slightest soft or friendly glance he would flinch away and go wooden, with pursed lips. Even his feeling for the countryside had gone, it seemed. He left the village almost at once. Loneliness that dwarfed even that of his school-days fell on him. London was drab and people were short-tempered and exhausted. Nobody wanted to listen to other people's troubles and everything was devoted to getting private life going again after years of grey public activity. He wandered about the half-bombed streets for hours to make himself tired. He woke yelling one night and his mother rushed into his room saying, "For Christ's sake, son, you scared me out of my wits!"

It felt as if a war-regime had settled into English life for good. There were identity-cards and food-cards. Everything was registered. When he went into the country he had the feeling that it was a huge dead area only for the recreation of townspeople. The intimate side of life had been pushed out. There was an air of surfeit and nausea everywhere.

It was difficult to get back to the peace-time rhythm, because the casual element necessary to it was lacking. For five years all little enjoyments had been relegated to a kind of relaxation-department in the war effort. He'd escaped all that by being abroad. But the grey aftermath was there, in the people who'd stayed. They were nearly finished. Everyone was bewildered. The war had made them used to the hard pleasures, and peace meant subtlety again. The newspapers and radio now seemed to govern all life; journalism had replaced society. People went on smoking and drinking in the eleventh-hour style of war-time.

But still Abbott's Road hadn't changed. There was only less food, everyone was tired and the shops were rather empty. On the other hand, there was more money than before; there was a job for everybody; the trade unions had a whiphand now; their fighting days were over.

His mother and father were a little grey, from the bombing. They'd slept down in the shelter nearly every night for three years. But still they in themselves hadn't changed. Only the 'higher world' had collapsed.

He had no ideas for his own future. He thought of going abroad again but a familiar listless reluctance to decide anything took hold of him. He went down to Chichester instead, as the only town he knew apart from London, and took a room there, planning to stay for as long as his annuity from the army lasted. He was there a year, alone in his room nearly all the time, reading everything he could lay his hands on with a remarkable hunger. Slowly he met people again. The 'higher world' really was knocked sideways. People got drunk and there was a hard promiscuity in sex. The middle-class was dead. Just a flicker was kept alive, enough for the country not to sink in the sea.

When he met Dick Pollocke at the T.I.M. training school he had a

peculiar sense of forbearance combined with relief. Would Dick be his first real friend since the war? He had a brief ecstatic impression that the Sussex days would start again, in a new way. It was something in Dick's light-blue, transparent eyes, and in the way he looked at him when they met in the canteen of an evening, as if they'd known each other years before.

But he was scared of a new relation. It was a fear of being exposed. He felt on the edge of a frightful confession all the time --- and short of this he couldn't speak. Everything in his past was involved in this confession --- the war, his life in Abbott's Road, the 'giddy fits' when he'd knocked on the floor frantically, his separation from Kit and the fact that he'd hit her round the face; it was covered in shame, in a dark, cloudy region. Why Pollocke should want to see him he couldn't imagine! He was awkward, with this dangerous flush all the time. He was also afraid of damaging Pollocke's first impression of him, presuming it had been a good one. And this intrigued Pollocke: it gave him the idea that Granville was rather exclusive --- too busy perhaps to need new fields. This, in turn, was something Granville was pleased to encourage. They began to meet each other, but always in a hide-and-seek way. Sometimes they sent notes to each other's rooms. It reminded him of the famous public schools he'd read about where the seniors had fags and studies of their own. Dick Pollocke had been to Winchester, so the atmosphere was nothing new to him. He wrote to Granville in a careful hand, putting in a witticism if he could, like a school-boy. 'Dear Granny', he would write, 'I haven't seen your stare for several days and wonder what new slush has passed under your bridges.' They would sit drinking beer together in the canteen and try to talk. But there was no common ground. They left with a sense of

having been locked-up together. Pollocke tried to be clever, Granville was simply awkward and tongue-tied. They blinked in consternation when they met, with a sense of the formlessness of their relation. The friendship petered out quickly, leaving a polite respect.

There were parties and dances, at one of which he met Pinkie. And Hanni came down for a week-end --- about the time she and Dick were getting to know each other. It was an unpleasant period. Nobody was quite sane. He looked back on his lonely year at Chichester, among his books, with pleasure. He no longer wanted to read much, and drank whenever he could. Partly there was the wonder of getting back to something like his old life and being with people again --- having tea in cafes and talking endlessly, that sort of thing; but he was always alone in feeling.

Pinkie dazzled him at once, the first evening they met. She was tall, with a light, healthy face, her skin smooth and brown from the sun. She was vague, her eyes wandering about in their forlorn, loose way, and he was awkward; they hardly shook hands. But they kept returning to each other in the course of the evening. She'd just come back from a holiday in the south of France with her parents, and her cheeks and nose were peeling slightly. And her hair was bleached, a flaxen colour in the front. She seemed to make a mistake about him at first: she treated him like a man-about-town; he was surprised but found the assumption useful --- it helped him cover his real self up! After two or three drinks she was reckless and swashbuckling, and talked at the top of her voice; the young trainees looked cautious and tame next to her. He adored her and stoked himself up with the hideous punch Pollocke had provided -- made with red wine, soda water and surgical spirits from the chemist. They danced together wildly, and he noticed that some of the other people stepped

aside from them in a gingerly fashion, disapproving. There was a great hauteur about her, sophisticated and self-assured. She chuckled at him, and in the middle of laughing she suddenly kissed him on the neck as if it was the easiest thing in the world! Panic seized him, but the drink helped him pass it off. She couldn't have meant it! Did she? And later he saw her do precisely the same thing to someone else! But he put this out of his mind. Thus in the first hour of their knowing each other there was a hint of the later confusions. After that they were friends. She stayed another week, at a nearby hotel, and they began meeting every day. They each wondered secretly --- as they found out from each other long afterwards --- whether they shouldn't remain just friends. But they were lonely, neither of them felt they had the power of choice. They thought they recognised the signal of love --- they'd been waiting for it so impatiently, and they plunged ahead! They were infatuated with each other. But underneath there was only the simplicity of fieldship. And also there was something distressing, as they got to know each other better. He went round with his mouth open loosely and his eyes wandering, in a peculiar imitation of Pinkie's face, as he got more and more infatuated with her. 'What a complete fool I must look!' he thought to himself as he walked along the street sometimes. It didn't seem sane! But he could do nothing about it. It was like being under a sweet drug. It wasn't the pure, direct ecstasy he'd known in Sussex; but he supposed it was falling in love! Pinkie's gaze shifted all the time: and there was something of a comfort in that for him. It meant he was never under a direct, piercing stare that might uncover him. But he never really trusted her from the first moment he knew her. Nor did he feel properly himself with her. But there was the trust of friendship. He couldn't

have said with confidence that she wasn't sleeping with somebody else at any time --- or even that she loved him! But he knew as a friend that she wasn't. She was blameless, yet - totally guilty!

She gave him a sense of nightmarish and subtle desires he couldn't hope to penetrate, because of her way of looking about her. Their first two weeks together were their happiest. They went everywhere arm-in-arm. That, too, had the golden quality of friendship. They were close together like children. She always recalled these two weeks afterwards, as if she'd only really loved him then.

There was nothing unhealthy in her strangeness --- that was remarkable. The strangeness was all to do with her mind. And that was separate. In her body she was clean and fastidious; it could be seen in her skin --- a smooth, unblemished texture glowing underneath with health. And this health had great resistant strength. She didn't smoke or drink, but if she did --- even if she took pep-tablets --- it seemed to make no difference: she only slept a little longer afterwards, and the warm glow, and her appetite, came back. The healthiest practice always seemed the most natural to her. She would suddenly push a full glass of liquor away from her at a party, then dance until she'd sweated it out.

He felt towards her strangeness a grotesque kind of worship --- something ecstatic and pained and full of awe. They were in the same boat, really; they couldn't face each other's gaze, and at the same time they needed what was healthy and simple in each other, behind the strange looks and gestures.

CHAPTER 10.

War suddenly brought this to an end. Nothing so miraculous had happened in his life! All the sixth-formers of the school were sent to the country as potential officer-cadets, to act as lookouts in the hills near the south coast in case of German invaders. They would get classes as at school but fewer of them, and they would look after themselves more or less. A contingent of twenty boys, of which he was one, travelled down to a village in West Sussex and were distributed among the houses, about three to a house. It all happened so suddenly that he couldn't believe it!

It was a tiny, silent village fitted snugly in to the side of a hill. All of a sudden it was full of life, like a city in which trees and hills had been preserved so that coloured lights fell on the leaves outside and homely voices could be heard across the fields! His life changed at once as if he'd only been waiting for this moment all his life! He sat in his room upstairs looking out of the window while he wound the khaki putties round his leg. All at once he was a soldier as well. It was marvellous! There was a slight mist below his window on the first day, and beyond a narrow gravel path he could see apple trees, the earth black between them. There were cheerful flowery curtains across the window and a glowing Persian carpet. A fire had been lit. The house had a sturdy, oaken look, with a wood-panelled bathroom. When he was in

his room he rarely heard a sound from the rest of the house except the creaking of boards.

The house was at the edge of the village, where the road sloped round the side of a hill, and behind it were steep woods protecting it from the bitter winds that came in from the sea. The owner, whom they were told to call Major, was retired from the Indian civil service and lived quietly with his wife. They went for long walks every afternoon dressed in tweeds, with stout walking sticks, followed by dogs. At meal-times a great golden gong from India was beaten in the hall downstairs by a pale, sturdy-armed maid, and the three cadets would sit down between the Major at one end of the table and his wife at the other. By her foot was an electric bell for the kitchen. Everything was done in a quiet and formal way, and little was said at meals. They heard the swish of the gardener's scythe outside, or the farm-tractor up the hill. The Major was tall and grey-haired, with a stern yet kindly expression in his eyes. He treated them with perfectly consistent respect as if they were his own age. It was the first time he'd come really near the coolness of the other world and he was fascinated. The rooms seemed so spacious! For nearly three days, apart from meals and his stints at the guardhouse, he did little but sit at his window looking out.

The docks were bombed, and his father's job ended. It happened on a beautiful, sun-lit Saturday afternoon, and the German planes, one wave after the other in perfect formation, looked like tiny, silver fish high in the blue sky. When his father went to work on Monday morning he found the whole of his area cordoned off by the police. One of the policemen asked him, "Did you work there, mate?", and when his father said yes he told him grimly, "Well, I reckon you can take a year's holiday

without pay, mate --- there's a million or more money gone down the drain there!" The yard where his father worked, and the whole of dockland from Woolwich to Tilbury, was a mass of twisted girders and rubble, and burning food. All the workers were laid off that day and his father took a job in East Ham with a catering firm connected with the army.

The guardhouse was in an outbuilding belonging to a farm, and when he was on night-duty he slept on the floor, doing two hours on and two hours off. The job of the cadets was to guard an area of railway line about a mile long. The farm stood among trees with a cobbled courtyard, and near by there was a fenced bridle-path that ran straight across country, with flat fields on either side. He looked at everything dreamily, seeing only vague outlines.

At night, when he was on guard, he climbed to the top of a steaming silo and sat there staring before him, sometimes imagining a movement in the darkness below. A breeze would stir the leaves and sometimes a cow would cough or low softly in the next field. A wonderful warmth came up from underneath him and his cheeks were flushed with health. He always looked forward to the huge breakfast of eggs and bacon and tomatoes soon after dawn, and the slow walk home when the day-guard came on, along the fenced bridle-path, past the mossy church at the edge of the village. The maid would just be up when they got in, lighting the stove and shivering a little. He felt strong and clear-headed.

One morning about six when the sky was already sunny and clear, with the slightest mist lingering among the trees, he walked to the railway line as part of his dawn inspection. He liked this spot especially. A bridge ran across the tracks, which were in a deep, grassy embankment.

He looked down on to these lines from the bridge as into a deep, endless ravine going in a perfectly straight line north and south as far as he could see. And something in the nature of a baptism into the countryside took place on this bridge. It was all so immense, and the fields were laid out so splendidly to the sky! He'd never known such spaciousness! The bridge was only used by farm vehicles going from one field to another, so that an intimacy hung about it. Its walls were of brick, mellowed by the weather, golden and red in the early sun. And between the bricks grass and moss had grown in places. It wasn't a bit like a bridge in the Abbott's Road district where the intimacy had been taken away and great trucks roared through. He could hear birds singing in the near by trees. And he had the impression that this immensity round him, unlike the immensity of things in Abbott's Road with their iron struts and spans, didn't exclude him. It was quite a discovery! Despite the massive early light falling on everything like a shroud he had an intimate sense of ownership. This bridge, too, had stout spans underneath, but they were made of brick and the size didn't confuse or belittle him. Some of the fields were yellow with corn not yet harvested, and the morning breeze made slight ripples across them. He could see the sea, a hazy blue in the distance beyond the hills. There wasn't a sound except for the birds. How strange that it could have been missed out of his life all this time, since early childhood!

He started taking long walks when he was off-duty. Then there were club meetings in the village to which the cadets were invited. Films were shown there, in a hall with huge beams that had once been a barn, and lecturers came down from London. Once or twice a week they went to the nearest market-town, where there was a bookshop with a low ceiling and

Tudor-style windows, and a snug room where you could have coffee. In the village there were two pubs, one of them with deep black-leather armchairs and settees where they sometimes sat in the evening, gazing into the fire. The leaves were just starting to fall, and there was a touch of winter chill on the air. Some teachers from the school had been evacuated to the market-town, and they came to the village several times a week to give lessons. But they weren't like real lessons. They were held in ordinary rooms, usually in one of the cadet's billets, with a blazing fire in the hearth, for only five or six cadets at a time. He seemed not to belong to school any longer. The world was up to something much bigger, and some of the teachers would be called up like the cadets after a year, and so there was an equality and freedom he hadn't known before.

One room where they took lessons had a great sycamore outside the window with dark-green spreading arms, motionless like a monument. He always sat with his back to the window, in an armchair, and the silence was so great that turning over the leaves of his book made a sharp sound. Nothing was too small for him to notice now. In London everything he'd read about had become just ideas, floating over him in a dead and neutral way! But here the leaves and the silence --- which was quite unlike the silence in Abbott's Road, perhaps because of the birds and the rustling sound in the trees whenever a slight wind blew --- made thinking and reading seem natural, even necessary! He found he could really enjoy a book for the first time, leaning back in his chair and letting his mind go where it wanted to. He used his eyes more. The world outside was closer: he could touch the leaves and in the morning he sniffed the air deliberately like a farmer.

He started really reading and learning for the first time. Knowledge poured into him. He always took a book to bed with him when he wasn't on duty; books were like listening to people talk, but in the silence, without time pressing down on you! And he listened for the first time in his life. He really listened, all poised, and quiet, not strained as he'd been in London. There hadn't been this leisure in London, this rhythm of leisure, slow and pausing; there'd only been an underground roar all the time, of the city, taken for granted like the smoke. He thought he could even have got a Cambridge scholarship now if he'd tried! It was remarkable for him to be able to read what he liked without feeling higher on account of it!

The shadow began to lift from his life. He made new friends. There was a teacher at the local school called Philby and his wife, and a few people his own age who came to the club, not cadets. The Philbys had a small house at the far end of the village and he started going there when he had a spare hour. They had two babies and a child of five. Quite a crowd gathered there sometimes. Usually Philby went up to bed early and left them talking. Jean, his wife, would be curled up on some cushions by the fire listening. She was the centre of the group and said once that she felt cheated of her youth by having children too early; yet she was only twenty-seven or so. Sometimes they talked all night, four or five of them together, drinking one cup of tea after another; it was a select group to which only Granville, of all the cadets, was admitted. Sometimes Philby would bang his shoe on the floor in the middle of the night if the talking was too loud, but he never came down, and Jean took no notice.

Jean Philby had a soft, smiling face and uncannily pale eyes.

There was a hurt look in them that came and went. She always gave Granville her special attention as if he were her charge. Once at table she asked her husband, "Don't you think Philip looks very un-English?" Being un-English implied romantic qualities. And Philby snapped, "No! I think he looks like an ordinary English schoolboy!" But she took no notice as usual and replied to this, "Oh, I think he looks like somebody who's just come from abroad!" It was the first time anyone had shown appreciation not of his qualities but of his being a person in himself at all! Really she brought him to life! When he was with her he never felt the old lurking sense of unworthiness, for the first time.

He became friends with a girl in the group called Kit and they fell in love. She lived in the village but her parents were usually in London, due to her father being an archivist for the War-office. She was usually at Jean Philby's for the all-night talking. But for weeks at the beginning he and she hardly spoke to each other; they would only gaze at each other sometimes. Then one hot night the following summer they stayed talking until nearly dawn, alone --- Jean had slipped up to bed with some excuse. They didn't put the lights on and he was aware of her as a shadowy form, mysterious in a way that made him catch his breath. It was nearly full moon and a vague silver light came from outside. Now and then there was the hoot of an owl, straight and neat-sounding, followed at once by the silence. Behind the house was a steep hill with woods at the top, now a tall black shadow. And there was high grass outside that came as far as the walls. They left the house together and kept a foot or so apart, afraid to touch each other, and took a path across the fields, going round the village to get to where he lived. They passed through a copse of young trees with a stream running through it, and there they

suddenly kissed each other shyly and uncomfortably, and stood there until they were chilled to the bone. The dawn was just starting to come up; for the first time they really looked into each other's eyes, and Kit said it made her feel giddy, like looking into a chasm that was marvellous and inviting but yet at the same time dangerous because one would never come back if one fell into it. She was still a tom-boy, with a lively and pretty face. She threw little stones at him and laughed. Before them there was a gravel path which became more and more yellow as the light grew, revealing bushes on the other side. The birds sang louder and louder in the branches above them, startling in the morning silence. She had black, glittering eyes and very white teeth that flashed when she smiled. They ran home shivering as the sun appeared --- to the Major's house, because her mother was at home. They tiptoed through to the kitchen where he wrapped an overcoat round her shoulders and put the kettle on for tea. He prayed the maid wouldn't come down but at the same time didn't care if she did: life was so different for him now --- a stupendous light had spread over everything and he was in a state of trembling ecstasy which he'd never even imagined before.

Kit was slower to say she was in love. He went through a week or more of frightful apprehension, during which he hardly slept; but even that was ecstatic, and at night when the warm air drifted across his room from the fields he had the satisfaction of dreaming about her face and of the way she walked. He always remembered the kitchen afterwards with its scrubbed wooden table and tiled floor and the perfect stillness of everything in it --- the cups and willow-painted plates on the tall dresser, the marble sink and the wooden ladles and spoons hanging by the stove --- and how the brightness growing outside made the copper pans glow with a

wonderful mellow warmth. That day, in the afternoon when there was hot sunlight, and the drowsy clip-clipping sound of the gardener's shears drifted in through the window, he wrote her a little note beginning, 'The beast has reared its ugly head! I'm in love with you.' He didn't know why he mentioned a beast. There was something fabulous about the phrase, he felt; and it made it clear that he wasn't responsible for his love in case it inconvenienced her. The following day she came to the house and stared at him for minutes on end, sitting on his bed while he lay back on the pillows. She said she could feel nothing. But slowly she came round and one afternoon looked at him with sudden recognition, smiling brilliantly.

A year or so afterwards, when they were hardly friends any more, she working in a factory in Liverpool and he a soldier now, Jean Philby told him that she'd always seen them as belonging together from the first; and now she regretted having 'made it easy' for them! "Look at the suffering you've both been through!" she said. But this annoyed Granville. He felt the suffering was part of his love, the other side of it, so to speak. But Jean Philby clung to an ideal view of life, and saw it only as a mistake.

He and Kit met at her house continually in the first months, sometimes staying the night on a narrow divan. When they did so she went up to bed early. The all-night talking became less. One morning Philby came downstairs early when the heavy dew was dripping from the trees outside and, leaning over the divan, gave them an intimate wink. Sometimes Kit came to the Major's house and sat in his room with him. Usually no one saw her because he had a key of his own. But once the Major's wife passed them on the stairs and looked right through her. She said nothing

afterwards but the Major gave him an embarrassed glance at dinner that evening. Probably they didn't care to pull him up because he'd be a soldier soon; people expected another trench-war when all the young men would be wiped out, as in 1914.

The Major's wife was friendlier to the other two cadets than to him. They took the dogs out for long walks and in the evening joined her and the Major for cocktails and bridge. The Major often told anecdotes about the 1914 war over dinner, describing plans of attack with the help of playing cards, and addressed most of his remarks to the other two. His wife described Granville as 'dreamy', with a trace of bitterness, though she also smiled; the Major always showed disapproval of personal remarks -- he would purse his lips and look down, quite stiff. She said once at table to the other cadets, "Granville seems to have packed up his troubles in his old Kit-bag, doesn't he?" And she laughed and sang, "Oh, smile, smile, smile!" To her mind he took not nearly enough interest in the war and so there was a double meaning here. There was also something delicate and melancholy in her. She would gaze before her in her armchair for minutes on end sometimes. She had no children; perhaps that was why.

One day he was astonished when Kit said to him, "You're always on top of the world so, aren't you?" And once in London when they were walking through the grounds of Kensington Palace a uniformed attendant crossed their path, holding up his hand and said, "I'm sorry, there's no way through here!" And for no reason at all Granville began blushing, rooted helplessly to the spot as he'd been in Abbott's Road! Kit and the attendant stared at him, for a moment united in a common human curiosity. And afterwards when they were walking away she whispered to him, "Phil! That's the first time I've seen you go red! I didn't know you could!"

She seemed to think of him as an impregnable sort of person! He was astonished and didn't correct her. He wanted to seem uncaring and gay all the time! And ironically, it was the main reason why Kit left him later on. He refused to be serious, she said --- for instance, about politics.

He spent quite a lot of his time with a fellow-teacher of Philby's called Walsh, who had a small, neat cottage near the church and was often at the local film-shows and discussions. He was a dark, reticent young man with a loping walk, and usually he had a pipe in his mouth. Something in Granville intrigued him, though there was little real sympathy between them. He was much more Kit's friend --- she was the one who introduced them to each other.

Walsh would watch him in silence, sucking his pipe. He never raised his voice, and spoke in a precise way, considering everything he said and sometimes taking the pipe out of his mouth to scrutinise its bowl while he thought something over, as if the idea he was after lay somewhere in the dirty ashes. He was the son of a big corn-merchant in the north country and could have had a large private income if he'd wanted it, but he preferred to teach at a small village-school and live on what he earned. His rooms, three of them, plus a kitchen, were religiously simple. He never took a first-class railway ticket - or a taxi, even late at night when there was a mile and a half to walk from the railway-station. His clothes were old but neat. He even refused to go into the saloon bar of the local pub, and preferred drinking mild beer in the public. He disapproved strongly if a friend of his took a short drink there - gin or whisky. He would say in a cutting voice, "I always used to like this

place, you know, when it was a four-ale bar and no more!" And he tried to blunt his accent into a common one. The farmhands and workers who collected in the public bar were beyond criticism or reproach for him, and when with them he would try to disown his own past. He seemed to be ashamed of Granville if they went there together, and he would try not to notice fellow-teachers sitting in the saloon bar, which was visible through a large hatch. He would call out, "A pint of old-and-mild, Tom!" to the publican in the same style as the others. And his pipe would begin to look like a clay pipe from the way he sucked at it there.

The Major's wife called Walsh 'the village-bolshie', and he described himself as a 'militant socialist'. This was the cause of his intrigued curiosity about Granville, as someone who had come from the 'right' class; and it was the ground he shared with Kit, who was beginning to believe in communism, partly under his influence. Philby said with a dry laugh that Walsh wouldn't mind a bloody revolution if other people shed the blood and didn't tell him about it beforehand! Of course, the Philby house was looked on as a nest of thieves by the bigger houses. Russia's pact with Germany was a big blow to Walsh and he lost face for a time. The Major's wife made capital out of it and told Granville she wondered he had time for a friend of the Nazis!

Granville never knew when he was going to say something of which Walsh would disapprove. Sometimes Walsh would be silent for minutes on end, sucking his pipe, his eyes fixed on a point in front of him, and Granville, his stomach turning over with a quaint fear, would go back over the conversation in his mind trying to find out what he'd said wrong. Walsh's silence made him feel sheepish and sometimes frightened but he never thought of reproaching him, much less of getting up and leaving;

nor, for that matter, did he reproach himself or change any of his own ideas! Walsh only showed inner anger: it made his eyes glaring and a little smoky, with a terrible fixity. He never had an outburst. On the contrary, his voice was quieter when he was furious.

Walsh always seemed to have secret thoughts hovering behind his set face. And the puffs he took at his pipe seemed to mark time to his silent thoughts. He would gaze at a point on the ground, shooting a quick glance now and then at the other person. If Granville spoke without preparing his words carefully beforehand, or in a precipitous way, with conviction, leaning forward, he would recoil at once and appear strangely exhausted, his eyes wandering away. So Granville tried to curb his manner in his presence with the result that, just as Walsh sat with a fixed expression, his thoughts going on in silence, so did he! This was, perhaps, his first real contact with the psychology of the other world. And he even seemed to realise this, but only as a dim feeling, not at all articulately. When they were together a third element was always present. There wasn't just the two of them in direct talk, saying whatever passed through their heads. There was this third ghost in the silence of the brain that made Granville's occasional departures into direct speech --- his words getting the better of him --- seem strange and unhinged. This ghost followed them wherever they went; and he knew quite well that it was started by Walsh, since he'd never experienced it before and hadn't found it in anyone else. The moment he was away from the man this ghost was gone also. He was in the true world again, his blood flowed properly and his joints were no longer stiff!

Walsh planned every day neatly. That was another thing Granville noticed: he always seemed to be sniffing life in order to form a plan for

the next step forward; he seldom just went to a place. If he had to go to London, as he sometimes did on a teaching job for the Ministry of Food, he reserved his seat well ahead. Before they went for a walk he would look up at the sky in a careful way, wondering whether to take a macintosh. He kept a large stock of medicines in his bathroom cupboard to cover any eventuality. He knew where every hospital in the district was and what means of transport was available in case of an air-raid. Even when they were actually out walking there had to be plan behind it, to see a church that had excellent stained-glass windows, or the ruins of a Roman villa that had just been unearthed. If he had to stay at a hotel he would book-up beforehand and discuss the price in a firm way. Granville felt quite ashamed of himself sometimes --- he was so untidy by comparison, and he did drift along so! Walsh had a neat way of dismissing all his practical suggestions.

It was sometimes difficult to get Walsh's attention, because he was so wrapped-up in his thoughts. Once they walked up a hill called the Mountain locally --- Walsh, Kit and Granville --- but Walsh talked and sucked at his pipe all the time and looked perfectly astonished when Kit pointed out the view of Chichester harbour in the farthest distance. It was best to be in a room with him, alone. Then a certain snugness was possible. It brought all the world within the compass of the brain. There were consolations in that. Once Granville asked him, "Don't you think Kit's simply lovely?" and he looked away at once with, "Oh! I've known her a long time, you know!"

Only after he was in the army and a long way from Sussex did Granville know, through a letter he got from Jean Philby, that Walsh had been in love with Kit but had refused to let this interfere with his

liking for Granville, or what he thought was his liking. They never met again. There was something moving about Walsh which he always remembered afterwards. He wasn't a happy person nor even was he good-willed, but yet he had this moral preoccupation that made him like a servant for others: he allowed himself no tantrums and he never turned people away from his door even half-way through the night. Morality was like a monster sitting on his shoulders. He had no real friends and spent hours alone in his front room. Every visit to him was a fresh beginning: Granville was as shy of going into his cottage after a year as he had been the first day.

Granville's nickname in the Philby group was 'the drifter', and Walsh was always on about this.

"Are you a socialist or are you not a socialist?" he would ask. "In our world you have to decide!"

There would be a pause and Granville would say with a laugh, "Yes, I suppose I am!"

Walsh talked a great deal about the revolution that would inevitably come at the end of the war. He went through a list of social schemes that would have to be effected to make the country happy. Granville nodded earnestly when these schemes were discussed. But really he was bored! He helped Walsh at the local political meetings and sometimes went to Chichester with him to pick up propaganda-pamphlets from the labour party headquarters. Kit was in her element in that sort of work. She didn't believe the revolution would be bloodless and said she didn't care much if it wasn't. She also told him when they were alone once that Walsh was a 'compromiser', one of those who would be used as a 'stepping-stone' to the dictatorship-of-the-proletariat and dispensed with

afterwards.

She and Walsh rounded on Granville together for not being more 'class-conscious'. He had taken her up to Abbott's Road once and it was this visit that caused her to introduce him to Walsh, as a new 'working-class contact'.

Once when they were walking together across the fields to Philby's house he suddenly said to Walsh with a yawn, "Gosh, I'm so tired! Let's sit down for a bit!" He'd been on guard part of the night and promptly lay down with his eyes closed. Walsh was annoyed.

"What do you want to sit down for?" he asked. "There are things to do!"

"What do you mean?" Granville laughed. "We're going to have tea at Jean's, aren't we?"

Walsh was at a loss for words and after studying the bowl of his pipe said, "It's your attitude ---!"

"What's wrong with my attitude?"

"Well, you can't just drift! You've got to help the others you left behind in your class --- you can't just drift off from them like that!"

"How can I help them?"

"By political action!"

He was perplexed. He didn't believe in political action but he had no argument against it! All he could do was shrug! And again Walsh started talking about the future, his eyes fixed. It was a wonderful dream for him, the time when all Englishmen would be brothers and there would no longer be classes. Sometimes when he talked Granville did catch a glimpse of this future and for a day or two afterwards he concentrated on political work. But it never lasted long.

He tried hard to become class-conscious. He read 'State and Revolution'. But he soon forgot it. He took long walks alone and read other books such as Pepys's Diary and the letters of the duchess of Devonshire, which he hid whenever Walsh came to his room. Kit was amused by the letters and drew no political conclusions, thankfully. He felt a growing resistance in himself to the other two, though he was in love with one of them: he wasn't going to be swindled out of his new life. He would enjoy the countryside!

Kit enchanted him with her lively, dark, glittering manner, so quick and soft at the same time. Her eyes always seemed to blaze goldenly, from the moment she opened them in the morning. She strode along when they were out together, bent forward a little and her chin pushed out with determination. He loved the way the skin went across her nose, like a little freckly bridge to her cheeks, so childish and delightful! Her skin was dark and she went brown easily in the sun, her eyes more searching than before. Her lips tasted of fruit, and indeed her whole face had something scrumptious and fruity about it. They ragged each other like children. But she became a young woman quickly, from a girl. Her body changed. Her waist grew slimmer and her hips and breasts larger. Her face lost its chubbiness and began to wear a more determined and aware look.

He was astonished to find himself a gay person. That seemed to take place in a moment, a few days after he arrived at the village. He romped across the field with Jean Philby's little girl and pulled faces at her. 'Why aren't I shy and ashamed?' he asked himself. But he wasn't. It was like standing back and giving way to something inside him which had always been there. It was the easiest thing in the world! He only had

to forget himself, and then a self poured out which he'd never known before! Also it had something to do with the air, cool and clear, sometimes smelling of the sea; it belonged to the wide fields and the steep, wooded hill outside Jean Philby's window. Sometimes, for a moment or two, the past would suddenly fall on him again like a black shadow and he would stand paralysed with fright and embarrassment, wondering at his own audacity, trying to stop a blush climbing up his neck from under his collar, talking very fast to hide it, but unable to move or turn away. These moments were unnoticed, luckily. He always managed to laugh, calculating that his flush would be put down to merriment. There was freedom, most of all, in the way Jean Philby looked at him; nothing in her gaze limited him. He watched his own nature unfold, with surprise. It was like starting life all over again. He began to notice that other people looked at him with attention when he spoke. All his ideas that had seemed outlandish and extravagant at school were now, apparently, sane, and sometimes other people even shared them!

If, when he was alone, the old Abbott's Road nervousness threatened him, or a hint of the 'giddy fit', he left his room at once and went for a smart walk through the valley south of the village, and gradually the air would fill him again, and strength would come back. His surroundings were alive now, and that saved him; in Abbott's Road they'd been dead --- hard, bare, sharp! The 'giddy fits' ceased almost entirely. He never felt lonely now, though he spent more time alone than ever before.

Sometimes when he was reading quietly in bed at night a ghostly whisper would come into his mind, 'You can't do it! You can't concentrate on that book, you're not good enough!' And for a moment he would shudder and be dislodged. That voice would go on for years, he thought. If only

he could have a cool life, taking an easy relish in things like the Major and his wife! Why did he have to be ravished and torn all the time? It would take him years to learn that attitude of leaning back from the world in cool thought, instead of straining forward all the time, driven on my the mond!

Living so freely was like living without death; there were no regrets and shames to hold you back and make you dream of a better life! You weren't turned inward, to reflect on life as a span of time. "Why do people need ideals?" he asked Jean once. "We've got the ideal here! Life is ideal!" And she looked up at him with a quick, questioning look, then nodded with a smile, in silence.

Even with Walsh he felt free, essentially: he thought of him in a context of his bachelor-cottage with the tiny fireplace, the oleander bush touching the window outside, the air smoky from his pipe, and the books on his shelves that were so colourful.

The silence, and the leisure in the dead of the night when he leaned on his rifle gazing into the darkness or watching the clouds move across the sky in the moonlight, gave him a new support. His education had given him no inkling of it! Had it been missed out deliberately?

It had put a design of names on the world; he realised that he'd been taught at school as if no other design existed in life except this design of names! Only men's names for things! The universe was 'space', 'gravitation'. Animals were 'nerves' and 'glands'. It implied that life was really a system of ideas, at its root, at the font of creation. And now he was beginning to find something behind that design, something that breathed.

His education had no words to describe this. It began to seem to him that the power of speech had been taken away from him, rather than given him! An iron vice had been fixed on to his head, and he could no longer turn freely this way and that. But he would be free!

The trouble was that he'd absorbed his education. He actually did perceive life as if men's names for it were the only reality! The sky was 'empty space' for him. He'd got this impression in physics --- a vast, empty universe governed by laws and full of bodies in perpetual motion like an infinitely subtle machine! This machine had never been known to come into existence; it was just there. Yet it wasn't a mystery, either --- the scientists were supposed to know all about it.

The earth was supposed to be whizzing round the sun at a terrific rate, but he couldn't really see how this was possible. Everything round him was quite still, or at least moving soberly, so in what sense was the earth whizzing round? It was only whizzing round in a sense. Yet it was 'true'. It could be 'proved'. But how was it he couldn't conceive it? Well, that 'whizzing' was only a way of putting it. It didn't mean real earthly whizzing such as he could see with his own eyes. It meant the earth whizzed in relation to the sun provided you could stand at a certain point in space millions of miles away, <sup>But</sup> which he couldn't. And all his education was like this --- a way of putting things. But never the thing itself --- never what you saw and felt and smelt. So in his childish way Granville had begun to doubt his own perceptions and to feel that he was being deceived in the most elementary things of life.

So now, when he looked up at the sky, its vastness didn't move him to wonder but to a kind of intellectual bafflement and fear much like his state during on of the 'giddy fits' in Abbott's Road. It was also

like looking into death, where he would fall for ever one day, toppling down into space and then further space. How painful it was to be alive -- what an absurd accident it seemed --- in a world that was uniformly represented as dead! And he realised it was a dead universe he'd been taught to believe in.

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He remembered this feeling even as a child, of being given nothing by this kind of knowledge. It was during a simple experiment which had showed how metals expanded. The teacher took a black ring and passed a little ball of iron through it; then he heated this ball over a Bunsen burner and showed that it would not pass through the ring no longer. Now Granville had understood it perfectly. But there'd been an odd silence in his mind which he remembered vividly even now. What was the teacher going to say next? But he said nothing! That, apparently, was the lesson! Granville was waiting for the lesson to be given meaning. But it had no meaning! It was like being told, 'A man hit a boy over the head', just that: well, he understood it, but --- what next? The trouble really was that nobody explained what these facts were for. That was the missing link. In fact, nobody said they were for anything! And this was what made the facts dead. They didn't lead anywhere. And more and more at school he'd felt an antipathy to this kind of learning. He'd even argued against it and said it wasn't the truth. But he felt defeated in the argument. Clearly it was the truth, or at least you couldn't say it was wrong'.

Now, in the country, he asked himself seriously what had been wrong. He felt he could solve it now, in the quiet of his new life. And this new life made the question more urgent than before --- because

he had a secret feeling that he was enjoying something under false pretences now. The 'truth' he'd learned at school had never included anything like this! Not this silence or immensity! Was his new life just 'private' then? This is what his education taught him to think! But he had an obstinate conviction that there was a truth in his new life that surpassed anything in his education, and that all this time he'd been misled.

Almost every day he took a walk alone, usually to get to the Philby's house. It meant climbing a hill, across meadows. He always expected to come to the top of the hill at the first stile, but another field stretched ahead, with grazing cattle. There was a copse of young trees near by, slender and wispy, with a cool stream, and then, beyond it, a deep wood of older trees, tall conifers and oaks, where he and Kit had stood that first morning, in the growing dawn.

Sometimes he would stand there listening, especially on a sunny day. Every sound --- a dog in the distance, the cry of a child --- melted into the silence. He tried to grasp what it was that held him there. His mouth tried to frame the question he wanted to ask. But he couldn't get even as far as the question! Whenever he passed a lovely spot it was the same. His tongue twitched, wanting to find the words of a question. What was the message being given to him? What were the trees saying, that he could listen to them always, without knowing what was said?

One hot morning he stopped at a disused quarry on the road to Chichester, captured by the stillness of everything. And he seemed near an answer. There was long grass at the edge of the road, and the quarry was like a cliff, overgrown with stiff, dusty bushes now. There wasn't a soul near by. The road was quite wide, but because it was war-time it was

hardly used. So it had a mysterious look. He walked down the middle. It was like walking along a desert-road, parched and dusty, only with bushes and trees close on either side. Everything baked, and his eyes were dazzled. There wasn't a sound except the shrill singing of the birds. They swooped and flew over the road as if a car had never passed there. The road bent frequently, and this gave it an untouched air as if every corner could lead to the most marvellous place in the world where one could stay for ever.

His hands were in his pockets and he was aware of a peace actually in his body that he'd never known before. It seemed that the sunlight was going right through him and he was part of the grass and trees, indistinguishable from them. He felt hazy, too, as if walking along and being in the open was part of a great sleep. There was no fixed difference between his own feelings and what was going on outside. He had the impression that if he threw himself on the grass and stretched out, its touch wouldn't be from the outside but only a further aspect of sleep. It again struck him as most strange that no one had ever told him about this kind of thing. And he had a sense of returning to something. It was a feeling of reaching home again, and of recognising it as home by the ease and satisfaction of his body, not by any sign that he remembered. His last visit to this home could have been before his life began, so strong was his yearning! The silence round him seemed to be beyond his life, while including it. His surroundings had taken him over entirely, their drowsy prisoner, and yet he was perfectly free, more so than he had ever been before in his life. What was this strange design in things, already there? It seemed close to having a voice. It breathed!

The more he tried to think about it the more baffled he was. It

stole over him like a marvellous, natural drug, forcing his mind out of action the more he tried to revive it. The moment he thought, 'What is this spell I'm under?' he became conscious of himself standing there alone, separate from the drowsy heat, and the spell was gone. And then, when the mind gave way again, it returned to life.

And he realised that this spell was precisely what his education had left out. It had been the tone of all the school-learning --- in biology the rabbit, but the rabbit dead, in history people but people dead, without their private lives, in physics the sky, but the sky dead, without its awful presence over us!

Suppose he tried to see things in that way, missing out the spell of life? And he did try, one morning, standing at the bridge. He tried to see the fields and trees as a kind of mineral and vegetable collection, the bridge as a mathematical problem of spans and stresses, the sky as empty space. And he realised that to do this he had to withdraw himself. He had to go cold. He had to take the life out of himself. Just what they'd asked him to do at school --- to qualify for middle-class life! And it occurred to him --- as the slightest whisper, hardly caught --- that this was what the middle-class view of life was essentially: life with the spell taken out! Was this all he'd learned --- not knowledge at all, not real knowledge, but the middle-class attitude to life? Was this all modern education was, in fact? Not learning at all!

Instead of walking up and down the bridge naturally as he did on other mornings, he had stopped and was thinking --- but this thinking wasn't real thinking, with the whole of him, it was a kind of brain-thinking, cold, peering at life from a distance, in a pale way, not in it any more. He

was pinning things down --- like pinning butterflies down by their wings! -- that was what he was doing with the things all round him! Those things breathed with a life much like his own --- but he was missing that out at the moment --- he was treating them as dead. And so, he was partly dead as well.

And he suddenly realised by a person should want to do that, why he should want to kill life. In order to make it work in a certain way! If you wanted a person to work in a certain way you could do it by going cold to them, by seeing them as just muscles to be manipulated: that is, if you had the power over them. And we had power over all this breathing countryside! It wasn't much of a power. But that was the only power we had, a brain power. We could watch and calculate, rather like watching a person to find out his habits and then put them to a clinical use; we could make the earth work as we wanted it to, we could force it to work for us. It did work for us, but to get it to do so we had to be half-dead ourselves! Q.E.D.'. You kill life to make it work, it will work, but its spell over you has to cease first!

Of course, it was the truth, you couldn't oppose it though you might dislike it! It was the truth about life considered dead.

And now he began to see that the world he knew through himself alone wasn't necessarily false, nor private like a dream.

Also he was amazed to find an England he'd never known before. It was the England that had gone before Abbott's Road --- before these gleaming railway tracks had begun. And to a surprising extent it lay there still, untouched. And he felt strangely close to it in his own person --- in his flesh and blood --- so that for the first time in his

life he knew what it meant to be English! Before, it had meant nothing. He'd just been a ghost --- a brain-ghost hovering in the streets, belonging nowhere.

Was that what he'd suffered all those years --- life with the spell taken out? Was Abbott's Road just a world with the spell taken out? Was it the work of people for whom life held no spell --- was it just one of their experiments, only with live people? Had they used live people to function for them as they'd made the fields and earth and air? Was that why it looked like a grey, silent camp where the guards were invisible -- not the real world at all, not a real place where things breathed? A place without trees, without any visible grace at all --- where the people were locked inside themselves and walked stiffly, keeping the flame of life going only in their homes, in tiny, warm, brilliant rooms!

Had that been the terrible hunger he'd suffered from --- hunger for the spell? A positive suffering would have been better --- Bethnel Green would have been better with its dark, smoky streets --- like corridors under the earth so terrible that they had a kind of new mystery --- and the children barefooted --- the women sitting at the doors and the wild scenes on Saturday night --- that was why he'd hung back from Walsh's clean little plans --- he wasn't sure it was better to live clean, without the spell of life all round you, than to live dirty with all the colour and wildness and passion still intact!

In them --- in May and Sid and all the people packed into that tiny hut-like house in Bethnel Green --- England had still been intact! People had only tried to take the spell out of them, but they hadn't succeeded. But in Abbott's Road they had succeeded. There, the last untidiness had gone: there was just the stark working world, with the skeleton of factory-

schedule over everything! But in May and all those people there had still been the flush of a peculiar kind of human triumph --- in May's cheeks you could see it, in the children, in the thick, sing-song voices! And a touch of the old limitless aristocracy was still there --- the rash, blazing quality which was now almost quenched!

He became aware of England's aristocracy. And he realised that the marvel of England, breathing like a wounded animal now, almost gone, in terrible, fitful starts --- had been laid by those people. They had had the spell of life! You could feel it in the duchess of Devonshire's letters. A terrible, blinding, self-destructive spell! A wonderful folly!

And he seemed to be looking for this again. But where was it? How could it have a face? How could it be a thing at all? What was it? His lips tried to frame an answer. Was it in the little village churchyard? Was it in the walk he took nearly every day? Was it in certain moments? Was it in Kit? He only seemed to touch it unawares sometimes, and lose it again!

All this was madness to Kit. She said she didn't know what it had to do with the future! She thought he knew something she didn't --- from his childhood, perhaps. But in the end she gave up trying to find out what it was. She began to think it wasn't there.

He began to wonder if that spell wasn't 'God'. He began to look at the village church with a new interest. Had it been the function of his education to exclude God?

He realised how much nearer he'd been to that spell as a child. He'd even had some religious understanding then! He remembered the church in Abbott's Road, tall and gloomy and rather bare, but with an odd warm

fascination perhaps because of its tallness and spaciousness. That memory was locked behind so many shadows now! He remembered the confirmation-classes --- he'd caught a glimpse of Christ, even, there! But then the image had faded. And then the word 'Christ' had become meaningless. Only now did it awaken again, slightly, as a dim memory he mustn't talk about. 'Christ' seemed to mean something different at the Philby's house. It wasn't a serious word there. It felt silly using it, even in the silence of his own thoughts. He kept quiet. Two images persisted in his mind: the Christ he'd glimpsed as a child, saying, 'Come, little children; unto me!', like someone who would never betray you as long as you lived; and the Christ at Philby's house --- weak, respectable, preaching, watery, an empty, historical name.

The sense of a private mission --- to think these things out --- grew on him in Sussex. It helped him through the war, and then through long weeks of training at the T.I.M. training school. It made him feel beyond whatever he was doing. So it took the stress off things. Walsh said to him once, 'What makes you think you've got to take the whole of society in tow and bring it into port?' It was the only time Walsh used a shipping image and he remembered it afterwards. In later years the same thing annoyed Pinkie as well. Who was he to give himself the airs of a thinker? It did seem absurd --- he had no qualifications! Yet, also, wasn't that an excellent beginning, to have no qualifications? What had the qualified thinkers done for him?

Sussex was also his first real taste of the 'higher world' he'd always dreamed about. He began to judge a person to be of this 'higher world' by the things he said, by his tone or expression, sometimes just

by the words he used. But he couldn't make this judgement articulate. He couldn't say what the principles behind it were. He was just aware of a foreign consciousness. It might be in a certain use of the word 'democracy' to mean something moral, rather like the word 'decency' --- as if life, even political organisation, was a moral affair, but moral in a small way, without passion or real concern, just conventional and colourless. But he couldn't see why this struck him as of the 'higher world'.

It might be in the use of the word 'sensitivity' to mean artistic temperament --- the moment a person said this word he seemed marked as 'higher world', without real powers of thought and experience, only conventionality, but conventionality masquerading under new words. That word was much in vogue at the time. It was fashionable to be 'sensitive', as it was to be 'progressive'.

You felt it in phrases, too --- 'Everybody can't be a genius', which seemed to slight the ordinary genius there is in every creature. Or, 'Keep an open mind', 'Listen to both sides of the question'. They were all signs of the 'higher world' mediocrity. Also a great respect for being 'modern' --- a fear of not being 'modern': that was another sign. They all wanted to march in a group of some sort, including Kit. Everything wayward, lonely, hesitant in Granville frightened her. Really she wanted somebody with a tidy exterior. And he knew this underneath. That was her world, really and truly. Really she looked for the same things as the Major's wife did --- a 'solid' young man with a 'future', who 'worked' regular hours and had a 'purpose' and didn't 'spill over' all the time; only for Kit he must be 'progressive' --- he had to use different words.

The Major's wife maintained that people should 'keep both feet planted firmly on the ground' --- this was another much-used phrase, but only among the 'reactionaries', not among people like Philby and Walsh. The word 'ground' here meant something like the facts Granville had learned at school --- life with the spell missing. As soon as you showed signs of the spell you were 'flying high'! You couldn't be relied on.

Both groups had the same scepticism, the same hardness that always rejected the imagination. Walsh and Philby had this strongly and consciously, much more so than the Major, in fact. Kit was afraid. Only Jean Philby had a lingering, regretful sense that she was going the wrong way --- she seemed to be looking back all the time, as she drew further and further into that hard world, always with her little smile, so full of gentleness and a kind of dumb hurt.

Walsh was always saying, "Well, what are you going to do about it?" Behind every thought there had to be a plan of action, to make it valid. And 'action' meant, not a change in your own life, but a social act like making a donation to the local progressive club. Everybody had to see it or hear it to make it a real 'action'. The marvellous, infinite actions of the hidden self didn't count. They didn't exist!

The others seemed too afraid to consult their own feelings, even Kit. Feelings were 'private' and 'subjective'. When they did give vent to their feelings --- not Kit, but certainly Walsh and Philby --- it was like a tyre suddenly being let off, the effect was of something private and chaotic, without real objective authority. The feeling didn't well up in them naturally, in a straight flow, but was interfered with and came out in a cutting and dangerous way that chilled the heart, or in the form of an outburst, which they themselves felt to be shameful. Granville had

grown up among shouting, feeling safe and intimate, with nothing twisted or interfered with inside him, and so he felt the difference strongly.

Everybody in the 'higher world' was in some way a cripple. He didn't feel this of Jean or her husband --- or of any particular parson. It was just an impression, dimly present, as if providence were laying it aside for him, 'To be accounted for later'. It was a dim impression that he must live the rest of his life among cripples because of his education, and ultimately become one himself!

'Higher world' people had all sorts of odd little nervous diseases that came from the disordered heart. One person had bad breath; another was locked in silence, like a permanent deficiency; another had trouble in the lavatory, and was always asking for laxatives; another --- where the disorder was closer to the surface, so to speak --- always had his head in a textbook of psychology, looking for clues; another was horrified at any reference to sex; another had an ugly obsession with it. And none of these things seemed remarkable in that world! They were taken as a matter of everyday life! No wonder drugs were needed --- to stun and paralyse the twisted nerves!

And, like Walsh, people always seemed to recoil when he began really talking from himself. Rather as if he were a stink, and they had to draw back! While his mind was working, while he was in strict mental control of his words, there was no recoil; but the moment he fell into natural speech, talking unguardedly, the recoil came. About this experience he was quite conscious and articulate. One day he said to Kit that some people made him feel 'a distasteful sort of person', and she replied with a laugh that she'd been made to feel that since a little girl!

It planted a seed in him during the Sussex-days which was the

opposite of the seed of freedom planted by Jean, though from the same world: this was an unnatural state of distress with people not his close friends; and it grew on him more and more as he penetrated into the 'higher world'.

There was something wistfully curious and divining in the Major's wife. He would catch her dreaming sometimes, gazing before her, a searching expression in her eyes, while her hands lay placidly in her lap. But there was always the recoil. Always a distasteful subject that had to be avoided! What was this secret inner stain?

Kit loved Abbott's Road but turned against it in the end. She told Jean she'd expected more 'class-consciousness' among working people. When they were talking about the district one day she cried, "Oh, it's wonderful all right, but why are they all so bloody passive?" She said it was 'a little heaven' --- but that was the trouble, you could live there for ever without 'doing' anything.

There was a look in her face he'd never seen before. It was a sort of 'we've-got-to-get-things-done' look, closed and grim like the look that sometimes came into Walsh's face. It was grudging and impatient. It didn't really go with her face. It was so different from her first look in Sussex when she'd been open and boyish, always laughing at him.

ease: he would feel all the struggles in his mind, its sharp girders and struts, falling, while he laid himself open with a pained, unwilling relief.

She spoke again: "How's Pinkie doing, all right?"

"Oh, yes, she's fine! She's going out to work again now, you know."

"Go on, is she really? What, in the same job?"

"Yes, she thought she'd had enough of sitting round doing nothing!"

"Did she?" his mother asked. "Why ---" she chuckled, "did she do a lot of that out there, then?"

"Well, there was plenty of work, one way and another, but we had somebody to do the cleaning and everything!"

"Yes, I remember you saying in a letter you had plenty of help in the house. So she's gone back to the office, has she? Some people don't know when they're lucky, do they?" she added with a laugh.

"Have you been sleeping all right?" he asked

"Oh, the same as usual --- I've never been famous for sleeping, have I?" He could imagine her smiling at this moment, with a quick intelligent glance after it. "I drink a glass of stout last thing at night --- the doctor said it might do me some good, but it doesn't seem to make any difference!" She paused. "Pinkie came back with you, did she?"

That was one of her divining questions: these were mostly rhetorical, because for some reason she knew the truth already.

His voice faltered, and he hoped it wasn't noticed. "No, she came beforehand."

"Oh, yes? I expect she had the house to get ready and all that

sort of thing, did she?"

"Yes, there were dust-covers all over the furniture, and she had to air the sheets and everything!" He said the first words that came into his head, quite panic-stricken for a moment.

"Did she, really? I thought you let the place out!"

"No, we gave the key to Pinkie's brother, don't you remember? And he used it when he wanted to?" He felt an impatience familiar from his childhood of not being understood quickly enough --- as the two worlds in which he'd lived had grown further apart.

"Oh, yes," she said, "that's right", in the slightly hurried way she had when she felt a gulf of some kind. "I remember now." Then she added in a more direct voice, some of its pleasantry gone, "I would've liked young Pinkie to come over for dad's birthday. We gave him ever such a nice party!"

"Good God, was it his birthday?" Caught!

"Yes --- oh, go on, I tell you once a year and you never remember! I think we'd drop through the floor if we ever got a birthday-card from you, let alone a present! We'd fade out!"

"I'll try and remember next year!" he said with a laugh. Why did a year always seem such a frightfully sort time?

"Yes," she replied, "try is about all you will do, I expect --- but as to sending us a simple card, well, as I said to dad the other day, it's never happened yet and there's no reason to think it ever will!"

"When's your birthday, then?" he asked with another laugh, but abashed.

"Well, if you promise to keep it a secret it's September 15th ---"

"But that's quite soon!"

"Don't you worry about that, old son, it's long enough for you to forget all about it and then swear black's white I never told you!"

"Well, was it a nice party?"

She chuckled. "Well, thanks for your interest!" Then she was serious again. "Oh, it was really nice, Philip! You know, I think people really enjoyed themselves. It isn't often you can say that, is it?" She seemed to narrow her eyes thoughtfully, and a strange sophistication came over her, of an inherited kind, with nothing deliberate about it. "Of course, you can never really tell, can you, when you're running round with sandwiches and cups of tea and that sort of thing, looking after everybody? We had ever such a lovely cake --- I went round to Hemmings and ordered it the week before. I thought, well, they're just as good as making it yourself, and you don't have all that bother with getting all the ingredients and mixing and all that nuisance. I don't mind doing it at Christmas time but what with getting the drink in as well and, you know, little presents for dad, I thought, oh, blow it, I'll go down to Hemmings and see if I can get one on order! And, you'd be surprised, that cake was one of the best I've ever tasted. It was lovely! Well, people came up to me and said, this is a lovely cake you've made, Mrs. Granville --- so it just shows you, doesn't it? Sometimes you take a chance and they let you down, then at others you strike lucky!" She laughed softly. "They kept on asking what I'd put in it and all that sort of thing. Of course, I never said anything. I thought, well, if you want to think it, think it --- I'm not saying anything! I thought, I'm the only one who knows where I got it, so why worry?"

"You haven't got a bit left for me, have you?"

"Well, I saved a couple of pieces for you and Pinkie, not that you

deserve it, though!"

"How old was dad --- sixty-four this time?"

"Sixty-five. I thought, oh, well, we'll give the poor old bugger a party!"

"Did he enjoy it?"

"Did he? Trust him! He got soused and couldn't roll his r's as per usual! I think he had a better time than anybody else! Well, he never was slow at having a good time, was he?"

"What about you, when's your sixty-fifth coming up, is it next time?"

"Oh, don't say that, son! I've got two more years to run yet! But I don't suppose anybody'll give me a party. Some people wondered why we made such a fuss about him being sixty-five, but I thought, well, we didn't do anything when he was sixty, or when I was sixty for that matter, so why not? I think you need a good party now and then, don't you? It sort of loosens you up!"

"Yes!"

"I'm sixty-three in September. It makes you think, doesn't it? Time doesn't stand still!"

"I always think of you as about sixty all the time --- both of you!"

"Well, I wish we could stay there, old son, but we can't, can we? It's all right when you're young, but when you get to our ripe old age the years start running like little rabbits. It doesn't seem two years since you and Pinkie went out there, does it?" She paused. "Well, Philip, how do things suit you out there?"

"Oh, quite well!"

"Is the work interesting?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I expect you've had some interesting experiences all round, haven't you?"

"Lots, yes! It's a very nice atmosphere out there --- you know, in the office ---"

"Is it really? Well, that's the main thing, isn't it, if you've got nice people round you in your work?"

"Yes! I've got a very good assistant. I don't know what I'd do without him!"

"Go on! He's a real good worker, is he?"

"Yes, He's an Arab."

"Is he really? Well, that's really lucky, isn't it? You can never tell what sort of person you're going to get, can you, especially if you're a foreigner yourself?"

"No. I might have got a completely dishonest person, and not knowing the language it might have taken me a year to find out, suppose he was fiddling the accounts or something like that!"

"That's right! Then you'd have to take the buck back yourself, wouldn't you?"

"Yes!"

"And there's another thing, when you go away and leave the office you do know you're leaving it in good hands, don't you?"

"Oh, I could go off for three months and not worry --- well, it'll be two months when I get back this time!"

"Well, I bet there's not many people in business can say that, is there, especially abroad like that?"

He was afraid she would ask when his leave would be over. 'In a

week or so' --- he couldn't bear to say it! But she said nothing.

"He saved me from a riot once," he went on, talking about Mohammed.

"Go on, did he, really? What, were you in the middle of it or something?"

"Well, I was in a hotel, and they were throwing bricks through the window."

"Go on!"

"And he walked right through it all and took me out to his car, and they didn't say a word!"

"Didn't they, really? Well, it just shows you, doesn't it? Goodness gracious me! I dare say they had a respect for him, didn't they, and thought, well, any friend of his is a friend of mine, sort of thing?"

"Yes, that's right. Anyway, they didn't try and throw any bricks at me!"

"Still, it's a nasty experience, isn't it? Do they get real wild, then?"

"Oh, yes, they scream and cry when their blood's up --- you know, when there's a real riot!"

"No, do they, really?"

"I saw a young chap with tears pouring down his face --- he was shouting about the government or something! You ought to have seen him!"

"Go on! They get so worked up they don't know what they're doing any more, I suppose?"

"That's right!"

"I expect you felt damned lucky to get out of it alive, didn't you? A jolly good thing this Arab was decent, wasn't it? Did he know you were there, then, or did he come in by accident?"

"No, he knew I was there because I left the office about an hour before to see a client, and I told him where I was going. So when I didn't turn up he put two and two together."

"Well, s'help me God! There aren't many like him, are there?"

"No! Of course, everybody knows when there's going to be a riot. Usually, anyway. They always go on round the colleges."

"Do they, really? What, the students?"

"Yes, that's right."

"Oh, and this time they thought they'd have a go at one of the hotels, did they? I don't know! Of course, it would be just when you're in there, wouldn't it?"

"Well, mostly English and American people stay there, so they thought it was a good place to throw bricks at, I suppose."

"Why, did they want to get nasty with the English, then? I suppose if the truth was told they get so frantic they don't know what they want to do!"

"Well, it's little wonder they riot, really, considering the way they're treated!"

"Why, aren't they treated right, then?"

"Well, most of the people are half-starved. And you ought to see the money the rich ones throw away!"

"Go on! It's pure greed, is it? Well, those people deserve what they get, don't they? And I suppose they think you're in with them, do they?"

"Yes, But I don't think they'd touch a foreigner, really. It's funny, isn't it? They'll set on their own policemen, but I bet if I walked out into the street they might jeer at me, but they wouldn't hurt me!"

"Go on? I expect they think, well, he might be bad, but he's not as bad as our lot! And from the sound of it they're not far short of the truth, are they?"

"No! You ought to see how some of the rich ones behave. Sometimes they won't let the poor have a doctor, even if they know they're dying. They say they don't want the doctor to get his hands dirty!"

"No! Well, that's just wicked, isn't it? I don't know, some people are the limit, aren't they? Fancy that! Not letting a man have a doctor if he's dying!" And she added, "Oh, well they'll get their reward. They don't do things in this country that they used to do, do they? The people saw to that. We don't stand for things like we did in the old days. Well, they say you can take a horse to the water but you can't make him drink, don't they?"

"Yes!"

There was a bustle at the other end, and she said with a laugh, "Watch out for it, Philip --- it's just come in from the garden! Old Nosey!"

"What, dad?"

"Yes!" There was some murmuring at the other end, and he heard his mother say in a joking way, "All right, don't push, you'll get there! Here's your dad, hold on a minute, Philip!"

She moved away from the phone and he heard her shout playfully, "Why the hell don't you wash your hands when you come in from the garden? Look what you're doing to that phone!"

His father answered in an elated way, between his teeth, "Go on, you're always on the grouse!" Then he bellowed into the phone, "Hullo, Philip! How's things?"

"Oh, all right! How are you keeping?"

"Not too bad! Mustn't grumble! Your mother's always on at me, of course! She never gives the old man a minute's peace! He heard his mother say in her rich way, in the background, "Yes, that's right!" and laugh. His father went on, "Well, when are we going to see you, son?"

"Some time this week, I thought! I'll fix something up with mum."

"That's right. How's Pinkie, all right?"

"She's fine! I was telling mum, she's gone back to the office."

"Has she really? What's the matter with her, dopey? Does she like work or something?"

"She seems to, doesn't she? Are you still getting out in the garden?"

"Oh, yes! I've just been doing some watering down in the greenhouse. Couldn't get down there last week, I had a bit of a cold!"

His mother again said something in the background --- "Oh, go on, don't make such a damned fuss about a snuffle! Anybody'd think you had pneumonia the way you carry on!"

"Hear what she says, Philip? She leads me a hell of a dance! Anyway, I just brought in some nice chrysanthus, and the gladioli came out nice this year! Tell Pinkie I've got some nice bulbs for her to take."

"Oh, good!"

"Well, how are things over there, son? Are you doing all right?"

"Not too bad. I've just been telling mum, the work's very interesting."

"Oh, well, that's the main thing, isn't it? How does Pinkie keep out there, all right?"

"Oh, yes!"

"That's good. We'd like to see you." And he added politely, as if he'd made a blunder, "Both of you." Granville could imagine him with rather a puzzled expression, blinking, trying to see things properly. His mother was always talking about his blunders of tact. And often, as in this case, there hadn't been one.

"I expect it gets nice and hot out there, doesn't it?" his father asked.

"Yes, it certainly does! The sweat pours down your back in the summer. It's like leaning against a wet towel all the time!"

"Go on, is it really?"

"There's nothing you can do except sit downstairs in a kind of cellar all day, and even there it's boiling!"

"God love old Ireland!" his father exclaimed softly. "I expect it gets you down sometimes, doesn't it?"

"Yes!" Then he said, "I hear they gave you a good birthday party?"

"That's right! I got as tight as a fiddler's bitch, so they told me! We didn't half have a lovely time! Quite a crowd there was, too! Mum got a beautiful cake down the road ---"

His mother said something, and his father laughed --- "She don't like it when I tell the truth! Mustn't tell the truth, oh no! You're supposed to say she made the cake when you damned-well know she didn't! Love old Ireland, you ought to have heard the lies about that cake! Your dad nearly put his foot in it, though! She had to give me a kick in the shins!" He added, "Still, she put the icing on. That's all she could do for the poor old bug! They get lazy in their old age, son!"

"That's right!"

"Well, mum wants to talk to you again. So we'll be seeing you

shortly, then?"

"Yes, that's right, I'll fix it up with mum."

"Good boy! Cheerio, then! Give my love to Pinkie!"

"I will! See you soon!"

When his mother came to the phone she said softly, "He's a proper gas-bag, that man, isn't he? And he's never got anything to say!"

She chuckled. "Except when he can put his foot in it. You ought to have heard him leading off about this cake at the party, telling everybody where I got it, I could have killed him! And there was I keeping quiet about it! Well, when are we going to see you?" she added.

"Why don't you come over for tea first of all, and then we'll make a date to come over and see you? What about that?"

"It's all right by me. What's Pinkie got to say about it?"

"Oh, she asked me to fix something with you."

They arranged a day for the next week, then his mother said in a quiet voice, "I suppose I ought to have given Pinkie a ring about dad's party, didn't I?"

It was in her wondering voice again. "Yes, you should have done," he replied, with the sense of surrendering a secret. "She'd have loved it! She was here a month before me!"

There was a slight pause, then his mother said, "What a silly I was, then, I ought to have phoned up, didn't I?" She spoke slowly, as if to herself. And she added, "Well, give her my love when she comes in, won't you? Shall I bring what's left of the cake over when we come?"

"Oh, yes, would you?"

"All right, then. It'll make the old man think he's having another birthday party, won't it?"

and makes her think about her own life and her own struggles!" he cried. "But when you say 'old Bill Shakespeare' and 'young Hathaway's husband' and all that sort of thing you make him sound small and weak and limited as if all he did was sit down and think up clever little plots for people like you to come and sniff at! Whereas what he did was wait for God to move him and pass through him, and Pinkie knows this! She knows the wonder of God in a person! All you seem to see in Hamlet is a text and a story, and so you make the play seem dead --- look at the way you talk about it when you say 'that graveyard stuff' and 'the get-thee-hence gambit'! You make it seem impossible that a man wrote it with his whole life and so there's nothing sacred in it for you, you don't believe in men, that's why, you don't respect them, you don't see anything sacred in them! That's how Hanni talks, too --- she isn't interested in the play much, I don't see why she should be but apparently she does, she seems to think we'll put her down as a fool if she doesn't say something! But when Pinkie talks about Shakespeare you feel he's somebody fabulous, not fabulous in a social way but just in himself, like when she said, 'He must have been such a sweet man!' But that's too soft for you, isn't it, you think you've got to be cleverer than that, you've got to say something clever and hard that shows how your brain's been working!"

He spoke in a rush, without noticing the changes in Dick's face. He paused at the end, waiting for Dick to take him up and challenge him. But he didn't. There was just silence. Dick looked up at him with a peculiar smile, his eyes flickering in a more uncertain way than usual, and murmured, before getting up to go to bed, "Well, thanks a lot!"

Granville sat there with his mouth open as they trooped out of the room --- the words seemed to have poured out of his mouth without

his knowing, and he tried to recollect what they had been. He went  
downstairs behind Pinkie like someone not quite responsible for himself.

"But suppose it produces less civilised government?" Granville asked him.

"It couldn't," Dick replied. "At least another government wouldn't cut off people's hands for stealing!"

"It might," said Granville.

"I don't think so," said Dick. He added that he didn't believe the Russians were behind the revolt, but he did believe the British were behind Creed. He said he based this on the fact that the Middle East had been an area of British influence for more than a century, and that Russia had always been kept out. But sometimes in zones of influence people fought for a just government, and this was what they were doing in Rubath.

Granville's answer was that it had nothing to do with justice or, indeed, with any ideals!

"What is it, then?" Dick asked him.

"I'm surprised to see you supporting nationalists and military men!" he replied. "Where does that fit in with civilised government?"

"I didn't say I believed in nationalism! I don't necessarily say people ought to govern themselves," Dick said. "All I say is that they should be governed as they want to be governed."

"The people aren't involved at all!" he said. "Where do they come in?"

"Ultimately they're involved."

"They're all sitting quietly in their villages, half-starved! Don't you believe it! It's never the people who start these movements!"

Granville decided to take this as the opening theme of his report for T.I.M., for which he'd been casting around in his mind. A middle-class was coming into existence in the Middle East --- doctors, lawyers,

use his name when they forced their way in. It was a very Middle Eastern thing to do, and there was an outcry at once --- the freedom of the press had been violated! Then the 'public-relations office' of Rubath, which meant Creed published the text of a telegram from the journalist's newspaper which asked for violent stories wherever possible, and if they had a six-element so much the better. "Anything with blood in it," the telegram added.

Creed then put out that he would talk to the press in the palace, but he would read a prepared text and not answer questions. Everybody wondered what this meant. Would he say something to tip the balance of crisis? Perhaps he would offer terms to the rebels or announce his own resignation --- it was known that he was no an embarrassment to the British government. But the first reports were uninteresting. The morning paper said that Creed had provided the 'uncollected information' that journalists had arrived in Rubath from all over the world by air and that they had 'more or less taken over' the only two hotels in the country, the Rubath National and the Tigris. "After this courageous sally into common knowledge", the paper said, 'he then told the conference that certain eye-witness accounts put out by journalists had been written in the bar of the Tigris Hotel.

Most of the papers said no more than this, but Dick came in with the whole text of Creed's speech. No wonder the papers were furious! Attacks on Creed had already started. Creed had said that the so-called eye-witness accounts had grown out of a scrap between a policeman and a native due to a donkey in the middle of the main street, and this had been built up into a major riot. A crowd had gathered, some of the police had thought it was political and fired some shots in the air; this in turn had

excited the crowd. Creed said the news was always being built up in this way. The bar of the Rubath National held most of the 'so-called respectable correspondents, who usually called themselves, I think, Diplomatic Correspondents', while the Tigris had the 'tabloids' --- the two bars were doing better business than at any time in the last twenty years, 'since I, in fact, advised the sheikh to put them up.' The chief of police had reported to him that not one of these journalists had been present at a demonstration or skirmish in any part of the country. Anyway, Creed said, these demonstrations took place too suddenly to allow correspondents, 'slowed-down by pints of boose', to get to their cars and drive ten, twenty and sometimes fifty miles. 'They come out here with their degenerate bloody faces,' he said, 'and think they can size the situation up in a couple of minutes when they can't even talk the language and have never even set foot in a Middle East country before! They think they can tell me how the place should be run when they haven't got a serious bloody thought in their heads, when they can't hardly read a book, and when they're never alone! They haven't been trained for anything, they live on a lot of bloody tittle-tattle, and they're the people forming opinion, as it's called, all over the world! No wonder politics is a cheap and nasty public-relations racket! And if I'd laid on my public-relations properly and handed you boose free of charge, you'd have all been eating out of my hand by now, the whole bloody lot of you!' The paper said Creed had stumbled into the vernacular --- 'can't hardly read a book' --- perhaps because his education at Oxford had been 'curtailed'; this was a polite paper, and its personal attacks had to be oblique. It meant that Creed had been sent down for homosexuality. 'And all those right-thinking people in England,' Creed had continued, are in fact the dupes of a lot

of drunken bloody wash-outs ---! Well,' he cried when there were interruptions, 'even if you're not all drunk you should be, to sluice out the rotten thoughts in your brains! This crisis would have died down a week ago if it hadn't been for you lot! Rubath is the same as any Middle East country, no worse and a good deal better than some, and everything'd be all right here if you people hadn't settled on us like a lot of bloody blowflies, to make money out of us, and without boobies all over the world to take your dirt seriously you wouldn't be able to do it! And I can tell you how most of you get your news, too, in case the rest of the world doesn't know ---!' He said that nearly all the news came from Rubath native reporters, that meant natives of Rubath. 'Every time a stone goes through somebody's window there's a story,' he said, 'and you're all sitting in the bars slopping the whisky down your gullets waiting for the stuff to come in. What a moral life! And you've got the guts to hand out morality in your daily newspapers! I'd like to see any of you spend a week in this palace --- I mean off-season, when we haven't the pleasure of entertaining riff-raff from all over the world --- without going off your nuts from boredom and loneliness! Well, I've stuck it for twenty years and I've enjoyed it. I respect these people, and I admire the sheikh. Well,' he went on, 'I'll tell you about these native reporters. There was one little skirmish last week that was prettily staged by the interested parties and the story all about it got through to the Tigris bar before it actually happened. These Rubath reporters are an even more illiterate and unscrupulous lot than you! They 're the sons of doctors and lawyers who wanted their children to inherit a better world --- well, they did, they got their better world, they've lined their pockets out of the misery of the people! And I can

tell you these boys know no more about the lives of ordinary people in this country than you arrant knights of the Tigris bar do! Two of them have got a school certificate which any bloody fool could pass at the age of fifteen! And one of them hasn't got anything! I know, because I taught ~~tham~~myself. You may have noticed that their mistakes in grammar are the same as mine. Well, some of you might have noticed --- the diplomatic correspondents; the others, I suppose, phone their stuff across to save themselves the shame of putting it down on paper! Those reporters, I repeat, are lay-abouts and raggamuffins, and I should be very surprised if any of them had a thought beyond this evening's sex!'

Creed ended by saying that the receipts of the two hotel bars were unparalleled, and that since he had shares in these hotels himself he wouldn't come off too badly. He was thinking of setting up a fund for the religious conversion of journalists everywhere to Islam. There were interruptions all the way through his speech, but he showed no awareness of this and spoke through a microphone, with a stout bodyguard standing in front of him. The laughter was sometimes uproarious, and at the end some of the journalists sang 'For he's a jolly good fellow!' When he'd finished talking he got up abruptly and without another glance at them strode through the beads of a doorway and was lost to sight.

It didn't command the headlines. Creed was a minor figure now. Dick read the speech out, swinging in his chair, and everyone enjoyed it immensely. It was the first real human voice of the crisis, breaking through the bleak, metallic sheet of the daily news that hid the light. Pinkie and Hanni were thrilled by it, and laughed and clapped their hands. The papers treated it like a music-hall joke. A few papers published amused biographical notes about him with a malicious undertone. He was

we saw a bit of each other, isn't it? What've you been up to all this time?"

He shook hands with his father, who said quietly, "Nice to see you again, son."

There was a richness in their voices, lulling and enchanting, that at once embraced him, making room for all the tiny unspoken things in a creature, the hidden follies and scrapes, and brought the world down to glances and the warm flow between people, to the actual moment alive between them. How exciting it was to be having tea! The kettle would make its special little whistle when it boiled, and the electric fire would glow in the hearth, and the carpet in the music-room, the deep armchairs and the divan, the little coffee-table and the long curtains would suddenly appear extraordinarily luxurious and comfortable, as he'd never seen them before! There was a glow inside things, just as there was in Abbott's Road. It wasn't that they made tea-time important by flurry; but that any moment between people was the top importance. Usually when there was tea in the music-room it felt as if a time-limit had been set on the proceedings and that at any minute people would be up and off, back to the routine of life from which this had been a brief and by inference illusory departure. Or someone would be clever and amusing: that would give tea its meaning! Or someone important would call and tea was given a special, spurious social glow, that passed muster in the middle-class world for the glow of life! But it was never exciting in this way, for itself, without any reference beyond the actual moment to what people's status was outside, or to their cleverness of talk, or even to the talk whatever it was: the talk flowed from the moment, as the silences did, too; it was the glow of the moment itself that counted!

His father still had his keen and yet dreamy gaze. His mother was a little greyer, perhaps; that was all. She gazed at him for a moment with shrewd, dark eyes, and then they all started upstairs.

"Well, son, how are you keeping?" came his father's voice, with its keen, inquisitive edge, from behind him.

"Oh, all right, thanks! Are you all right?"

"Not too bad!" his father cried. Then he added in a tone that meant a leg-pull, "Bit too much work in the house, that's all!"

"Go on, I like to hear you talk," his mother said, taking up the tone in an acknowledged, ritual manner. "Anybody'd think he was a poor, hard-done-by creature, wouldn't they, Philip?" Granville laughed. She puffed at the first landing and leaned on the bannister for a moment.

"Blimey, you've got some stairs here, haven't you?"

"You're getting old, that's your trouble!" his father said, coming level with her. "Here, give us your arm!"

"Now wait a minute, don't go so fast --- what's the matter?"

His father pulled at her arm jokingly, and winked at him. "Have to help the old lady sometimes!"

His mother had plump cheeks and a little line at the corner of her mouth as if from setting her chin in a determined way; her eyes were tired but her old, divining look was still there. Wisps of grey hair came over her brow. His father had put on his Sunday best, with a trilby hat over his eyes, and black, polished shoes.

"Pinkie at home?" came his father's voice again. This time there was the smallest hesitation in his tone.

"Oh, yes! She's upstairs getting the tea ready."

"That's right. We could just do with a cup of tea! How 's

she keeping, all right?"

"Oh, yes, she's fine!"

"Keep her in order, do you?" his father asked with the suggestion of a laugh.

"I try to!"

"That's right! They need it, son, you take it from me!"

"Oh, listen to that," his mother said, glancing at him as they struggled up the stairs, "quite the little tyrant, isn't he?"

"Well, who's the boss, then?" his father asked.

"I know who does the housework, that's all I know!" She smiled at Granville. "Of course, they don't think that's real work!"

"Who does the washing-up, then?"

"All right, all right, just because you do a bit of washing-up once in a while!"

"Once in a while? Cord ---!" He gasped in an exaggerated way.

"I like that! Every dinner-time, you mean!" his father added, just as Pinkie came down to meet them, full of smiles.

She stretched her hand out to his father first. "Hullo, there!"

"Hullo, my duck, how are you?"

She looked tall and robust, towering above them from the landing above. His father grasped hold of her with a hearty movement, almost pulling her over, and gave her a smacking kiss on her lips. Her eyes lost their vagueness for a moment, blazing slightly from the quick, overwhelming contact.

"How are you, my girl," his father repeated, gazing into her eyes, "all right?"

"Fine, thanks! Are you all right?"

"Oh, not so dusty! Getting old, you know, that's all!"

Then Pinkie kissed his mother and said, "Hullo, Mrs. Granville, how are you?"

"All right, thanks, dear. You look well!" There was a quiet confidence between them. "How do you like it out there?"

"Oh, it's lovely," Pinkie said in a mild voice. "Sun all the time!"

"From what Philip was saying there's a bit too much of it at times, isn't there?"

"Well, it gets unbearable about this time of year. Last year it was ghastly!"

"Was it, really? Still, you both look well on it, anyhow!"

They walked into the music-room.

"Well, this hasn't changed," his father murmured, eyeing everything. "I expect you're glad to be back in a way, aren't you, Philip?"

"Oh, yes! It's nice to be back in these rooms again, I'd almost forgotten what they looked like!"

"That's right, you do, don't you, when you've been away all that time?"

"Yes!"

Pinkie told them about the report he'd been given to do, and the extra leave.

His father laughed. "Cord, I bet you're sorry, aren't you, son? Another month's leave?"

"Yes, it was quite a surprise!"

"Take it easy while you can," his father said. "That's my motto!" And when they were seated he went on, "And what does the old country look

like after two years?" He smiled across at Pinkie. "Not so dusty, eh?"

"Not too bad!" She smiled, too. "I could do with more of it!"

"Of course you could!"

"It's funny," his mother said, "you can have all the comforts in the world, can't you, but if it's not in your own country it's never the same, really, is it?"

"Hark at who's talking!" his father cried. "What do you know about it? You've never been abroad, have you?"

"No, but ---" She glanced across to Pinkie. "It's obvious, isn't it? It's never going to be the same if it isn't your own country, is it?"

"Well, it isn't for me," Pinkie replied. "I don't think you really relax if you're abroad all the time."

"That's right." She turned to his father. "See, clever dick? You don't know everything!"

He laughed. "No, nor do you!"

His mother put her hand-bag down by the side of her chair, near her left foot, as she always did when on a visit. It looked so comfortable lying there: it suggested an exciting visit to him, from childhood association. She bent down and opened the clasp, then felt inside for a tiny frilled handkerchief she always carried, and deftly wiped her lips with it. He remembered she'd always carried a little bag of cachous at one time, in the shape of tiny hearts and stars, coloured bright red and yellow and blue, to suck.

"Well," she said, settling herself again after she'd put the handkerchief back, "we've been having some funny warther lately, haven't we? Sunny one minute and cloudy the next. Talk about August! It's

more like December, isn't it?"

"Yes," Pinkie replied, "we started using fires again last week."

"So did we!" his father said, crooking one leg over the other, his head back. "I said to mum, come on, I said, let's get that fire alight, it's chilly in here!" He added with reminiscent surprise, "And it was, too."

"Then we didn't have any wood to start it," his mother mumbled, looking at Pinkie again confidentially. "Well, you don't think of it in the middle of summer, do you? Still, we got it alight somehow, with some old scraps!"

"Of course," his father said, "at one time we used to light it regular in the summer to get the water hot, didn't we?"

There was a pause. "What do you mean, at one time? Anybody'd think it was twenty years ago to hear you talk?" his mother cried.

Pinkie chuckled, hearing the familiar approach of an argument between them.

"Well, how long ago was it, then?" his father asked, a determined and yet baffled expression on his face.

"How long do you think it was?" she asked quietly in return.

"Oh, about five years, I should think," he replied, winking at Pinkie because he was really doubtful about this.

"Five years?" She shifted in her seat. "You must be crackers!"

"Well, it's four. Young Philip was home, I know that!

"What, when we had the heater put in?"

"Yes!"

"Don't talk rot, for Christ's sake!"

"Well, didn't he come down and say they'd put the wrong switch

on or something ---?"

"Philip?"

"Oh, no." He looked lame and added in a soft voice, "That was young Will, wasn't it?" This was Granville's eldest brother.

His mother shook her head and chuckled, turning to Pinkie: "I don't know --- this man! I've never known anybody get his dates and years mixed up like him! Anyway," she added, looking across at him again, "he didn't say anything about the switch being wrong, he said they ought to put it outside the bathroom door instead of inside, so we could writch the water on without going in every time, and it's safer."

"Yes, well," his father said, going headlong into the argument again, "that's more than three years ago, I bet!"

"What?" She leaned forward, to deliver her thrust slowly. "That was last year, sippy date!"

"Last year? Will wasn't home last year!"

"What do you mean, Will wasn't home?"

"What I say!"

Pinkie was enjoying herself thoroughly.

"When was Will home, then?" his mother asked in her quiet tone again.

"Will?" He sounded as if the name hadn't been uttered before. He looked sheepish for a moment, pausing. Then he murmured, "Two years ago, wasn't it?"

"Two years! It was last year!"

"Don't talk rot!"

She shifted in her seat again, beyond her patience. "It was last year, I tell you!"

"Last year? I can remember that heater over the bath two Christmasses ago, anyway? What are you talking about, last year?"

"You can remember what?"

"That heater over the bath the Christmas before last!"

"Oh, you can, can you?" She winked at Pinkie. "Well, you're a marvellous man, because that heater wasn't even manufactured two years ago. It only came out last year."

"What?"

"What?" She imitated his 'bark', as she always called it.

"Just think it out!"

There was a pause. And then, as always at the end of one of their arguments, his father said quietly, his eyes raised in puzzlement, "Oh, yes, that's right. Will got home on my birthday, didn't he? I was sixty-four, wasn't I?"

"And when was that?"

"Last year."

"The bell's rung at last! she said with a laugh. "He always gets there in the end, even if you do have to drag him!"

Granville was always the official tea-maker of the house, and as he was going upstairs to do it, Pinkie having prepared all the other things, his mother said in the tone of protective intimacy she always used when he was a child, "Make it nice and strong, won't you, duck?"

Hanni came later and helped, moving round the room with a plate of cakes, smiling and listening attentively to everything his parents said, but saying little herself. It seemed a nostalgic pleasure for her. She made extra sandwiches and cut the crust off so that they looked most professional, and she arranged them round the plate on a paper doily in

a little design. Pinkie let her more or less take over.

Granville put two heaped teaspoonfulls of sugar in his own tea and his mother at once exclaimed, "Good God Almighty! The way you pile it in! You're drinking toffee, my dear!" She turned to Pinkie: "You ought to have seen what I used to spend on sugar when these boys were kids! Talk about sweet teeth!"

"Yes, we've never taken much of the stuff ourselves, have we?" his father said quietly. "Never more than half a teaspoon."

"No, it's funny. You'd think they'd take after you, wouldn't you?"

Pinkie nodded and murmured, "Yes", in her bored way, very slowly, her eyes gazing into the distance. It was becoming a strain for her. He only hoped she'd last out: she could be so rude sometimes, getting up and going off to paint her lips or something, in her room. She always refused to make a false effort. And, indeed, this room where they were sitting was made for raw desires, and cleverness, and arguments on long summer evenings, and secret, unfaithful dreams, and bottles of wine on the coffee table, leaving the same round stain each time, and sombre thoughts that were too reflective for Abbott's Road. But the strain wasn't in Hanni. She sat there curled on the floor at the foot of the divan, perfectly at home, like a child.

His mother made a comfortable sigh after her first few sips and said to him, "Mm, this is a lovely cup of tea, son."

"Yes," his father said, smacking his lips deliberately, "nice cup of tea!"

Pinkie told them that Hanni had been born not far from Basrah, but Hanni didn't enlarge on it and from there they went on to the crisis. The crisis! He'd forgotten it! And now it seemed to have lost its

sting.

"It looks as if they want to damned-well start another war, doesn't it?" his mother said.

"What do you think, Philip?" his father asked. "Do you think there'll be any trouble?"

"No, I don't think so. These things usually blow over, don't they?"

"Well, I always say they make these damned crises to keep the people on their toes," his mother murmured. Then she asked in a higher, more open tone, "Doesn't that affect you going back, Philip?"

"I haven't heard anything yet," he said. "I shouldn't think so."

"Well, you don't want to go out there and get mixed up in one of those riots again, do you, Pinkie?"

"No!"

"I suppose it's the old story, isn't it?" his father said.

"Keeping the people down, then wondering why there's trouble."

"That's right."

"They can keep their wars as far as I'm concerned, anyhow," his mother murmured.

"They certainly can! One's enough for me!" Pinkie cried, waking up.

"Well, we've been through two, and as far as I can see they didn't bring anybody any good, either of them."

"No, we don't want any more of that lark in a hurry," his father said. "Cord 'blige me," he added reminiscently, gazing at the floor, "those raids we used to get!"

"Go on," his mother cried with a laugh, changing her tone, "what

do you know about it? You were asleep all the time!"

"Asleep?" his father asked with a smile. "I don't know what you mean, dear. You know the trouble I have sleeping!"

"Yes, that's right! The way he used to snore through them raids," she went on to Pinkie. "I used to shake him --- 'Come on, wake up, there's something coming down on top of us!' I used to get scared out of my wits. Not him! He used to wake up all dopey and say, 'What's the matter? Why the hell don't you let me sleep?'"

"Well, a man needs his sleep, doesn't he, Pinkie?"

"Not like you sleep!" his mother cried. "Talk about snore!"

"That's right, she used to wake me up in the middle of the night when we was down the cellar and say, 'Stop snoring! I can't hear the bombs!'"

"Oh, I did use to get frightened! I used to listen to the whistles and think, 'I wonder if that one's for us!' And there was he snoring all the time!"

"Well, what's the use of worrying, that's what I say!"

"I used to say in the morning, 'That was a terrible raid last night,' and he'd say 'What raid, I didn't hear anything!'"

He felt a pleasant drowsiness as their voices went on quietly, so protective, as in childhood, taking over from each other smoothly. The street outside, bare and bleak in the chill wind, was remote from them, and the low, dazzling-grey sky. His father's shoes reminded him of the heavy boots that the men had once worn, carefully laced up and polished; the silence had always throbbed in these days, as it was doing now. All the sounds outside had had an intimate tone, as if they belonged to the warm, enclosed room and weren't foreign and impartial as they

usually were. He imagined leaning over the table in Abbott's Road reading about the crisis: the heavy, black headlines would seem to describe an angry state of affairs over the roof-tops and far away, like something in the sky; the sky was of such importance there --- it brought so much from the outside world; there were the storms, the flashes from the trains passing in the distance, the voices over the radio reading the news --- the bombers that had come in the war, the searchlights, the flaming aircraft that sometimes floated down in the night making a howling sound that turned the sky into a kind of domed hall where there was no distance! Why hadn't he gone over to Abbott's Road for a visit? He had a moment of panic. He'd left it too late! There was only a month left. He ought to be going down there more and more. Supposing his parents died, he'd never be able to go there again; his roots would disappear; the tiny house would go to someone else! He had the sense of trying to snatch at something. He was trying to snatch something across the division in his life. 'When will I get my life straight?' he asked himself. There was this inertia that clouded his will, clouded his heart! Where had he been since he left their world? They sat there unaware of any change in him. He answered their questions and nodded, feeling ponderous and slow compared with them; how quick their world was!

Downstairs, when they were going, his mother turned to him and said, "What a nice girl that Hanni is, isn't she?" He nodded, and then they kissed goodbye. He'd be coming over to see them, in the next week, or perhaps the week after. And Pinkie? It depended on her job. She'd only just managed to get that afternoon off, he said; he invented this quite freely. But perhaps they'd both come over on a Saturday, when she was free. They ought all to go out somewhere, perhaps for the day.

And they waved from the street. "Good bye, son!"

Upstairs there was renewed movement. The usual rhythm was back again. Pinkie was in the bathroom getting ready to go out, and Hanni was making herself some sandwiches to eat at the office later that evening. They were calling out to each other between the two floors, talking about the man nicknamed 'Joe Clockwork' whom Hanni had been out with the previous Saturday. He heard her say with a spluttering laugh that 'Clockwork' had large ears, and Pinkie also laughed. They seemed in charge of themselves again, after the brief interlude of his parents; there was more crackle in the house. He returned to it reluctantly, with fatigue. He thought of his parents arriving back home, perhaps at this moment. They would open the front door and bustle inside; probably his mother would say, "I'm dying for another cup of tea, aren't you?" They would lay the cloth perhaps, take off their shoes and then open the little box by the fireplace where their slippers were kept. There would be a whist-drive later on, or a dance at Tatlin Broadway. Soon they'd be starting to get dressed, washing first, with a dim light in the scullery, then pulling out drawers and opening the wardrobe in the bedroom upstairs, the thought of a crowded and smoky hall before them ...

Pinkie and Hanni were going out together. It was Tuesday, and so, he thought, Pinkie should have no ambiguous appointments ahead of her. She said she was meeting someone in the firm to 'check up on something', and she'd be back for dinner.

The evening paper only made a reference to Russian manoeuvres on the Persian border which everyone had expected in any case. The atmosphere of politics drifted back like a slow foul breath from the street. Pinkie and Hanni left the house and everything was quiet. His parents'

presence was still in the room. The sounds outside were sad --- people's quick steps and a car brushing past. When it began to get dark he took a record from the pile on the floor, behind one of the armchairs. They were dusty and scratched, and some of them, including his precious Schubert impromptus, were broken. He stared at the black, shiny fragments and was surprised to be feeling no shock or regret. What did it matter? They were dead objects, without intimacy or touch! They fitted the ghost-life he was leading: men playing instruments, but unseen, at another time and place; borne to him by ingenuity, voices coming from nowhere while the intimate heart lay still, receiving it, alone and at one remove, staring into space, inert like a bundle of nerves and guts that had been discarded in the movement of history!

He found 'Fidelio', and happily all the records were intact. He put on the beginning of the second act and from the moment of the first note everything changed. He hadn't put on a real record since his return. It began to flood through him and opened all his fibres and the channels of his being. Music! Tears flooded to his eyes. The notes seemed never to have been made on the earth; and he seemed never in his life before to have heard pure sounds! There was also a perfect, solemn rightness in the notes as well, as if there couldn't be another arrangement for them and the order had been made before life started. He waited for the prisoner in the dungeon to begin his 'Welch dunkel hier!' And then it began, breaking out in a marvellous and unbearably beseeching way from the other notes. He was in a state of collapse and subservience, yet strong as well, the tears pouring down his cheeks in a rush as if his face had nothing to do with their activity; but at the same time, again, there was the order underneath, the total rightness of it all. The music entered

pain with terrific firmness and insight. He could feel the man leaning forward in the dark, as in a performance he'd seen at the Graz opera house a few weeks after the war had ended, when he'd travelled down to Austria, when everything had been crushed and burdened in war and distaste; and this same voice had climbed out of the darkness with the same beseeching distress, crying for freedom! This freedom was like a lover; in the song there was frightened, tender sensuous yearning for it, for the touch of her dress, for a glance if that was all she could afford! And Beethoven himself seemed to be leaning forward as well, through this man, inside his voice, touching the listener with a clam hand on his knee, in such intimacy, from the other side of life, comforting and yet always showing you the darkness unflinchingly, so that even in the darkness of the prison there was order! The music poured over him and through all his fibres --- 'What have I been doing all this time?' he thought! 'Where has my life been?' For music always did this as well: it took the strands of your silent life and drew them together, seeing if they would go together, trying for the harmony and putting you on the path again. How could he have gone so long without this purity? Even at the concerts he hadn't caught this moment: it was always a moment --- music was never a static thing lying before you, never the same, but a moment, a conjunction, caught, gone! But this was where his life belonged --- to this purity! He meant to keep it! He refused to let it go! If only he could keep it, the harmony he had in his hands now! Life was so dry and full of ashes! He couldn't keep it. It died away... It was only a moment. The end of the song came, when the prisoner imagined being free and seeing Leonora again, crying 'Leonora! Leonora!' in a mounting beseeching voice like a sexual cry; and all of a sudden Granville had the sense that

music was the light, was in itself the flash across the sky, not sound any longer but a being that had an endless existence and could only be glimpsed! The record ended. A record! It was only a record!

The sounds outside came back. He was calm. He didn't trouble to dry the tears on his face but let them roll down into his mouth and dry slowly, making his skin smart. They were so dispassionate from him, like rain on his cheeks, that he had the impression that Beethoven had shed them for him; Beethoven had taken on his suffering on his shoulders and shown where the order and strength in it lay, and the rightness. It didn't seem wrong to suffer! This made him calm. He felt in the thick of life; suffering was movement through it! It must have cost Beethoven such pain, he thought. This calm he had now was Beethoven's gift to him, as pure as the gift from Christ! It was like coming to terms with his life in its wretchedness; there was an order here, he could feel the message of it and received its certainty again. He didn't care if Pinkie came back early or not; but, as if in reply to his state of strength, she did come back, with oysters and wine, early, as a treat, she said! She talked about his parents, and how they always made her 'feel good'.

The news next day was that there had been more rioting in Rubath, this time close to the British garrison, and several people had been killed --- it was uncertain whether by police-bullets or British ones. The British headquarters there denied that troops had taken part, but all Arab spokesmen scorned this. The papers talked about an 'outcry' from all over Asia. It looked as if England had fewer and fewer friends. There was a big set-to in the kitchen in the evening when everybody assembled.

Dick was in a good mood and said that whenever he lifted a glass to his lips he always had a 'fellow feeling' for Creed. He thought of him --- probably 'an old sentimentalist' --- festering in that palace and calling the sheikh 'darling' at breakfast. "Such a noisy call-to-prayer this morning, darling --- does it really have to be so loud?" He'd heard that they both had spy-holes called 'Les Voyeurs' in the walls of their bedrooms which gave a view of the main guest-room, where they put anybody 'choice'. Creed would say, "A choice article coming out from England this week --- used to be at school with him --- enough was never enough for that one --- just up your street, eh, cheeky-sheek?" And the sheikh was probably 'a nice enough old boy.' However, Dick added, if he hadn't been 'by principle' against capital punishment he would have had both the sheikh and Creed 'tried by an international court-of-law' and executed if found guilty. This was an astonishing statement coming so soon after his music-hall act, and Pinkie gave him one of her disbelieving guffaws. Dick had talked coolly, without unpleasantness.

"I don't believe in executions," he murmured, "but these boys, pleasant as they might be, have incurred the wrath of mankind all right!"

The headlines that morning had created a sensation. One paper had a single word in massive type, MASSACRE, and underneath in smaller letters, 'British troops involved?' An anglican minister was to broadcast, calling for the abdication of the sheikh. The evening papers said that a middle-aged man had chained himself to the railings outside the Rubath legation in Queen Anne's Gate.

Granville was silent most of the time. It was decided that everyone except Glenning, himself and Pinkie would go to the demonstration on Sunday. He said he might go as a spectator. Glenning said he

He wasn't scorned by the others so much as blandly disregarded. Linger-Longer laughed. Gerald had a 'classy' accent and she relegated everything he said to the harmless region of history, where 'blimps', 'pukka sahibs' and 'jingos' talked. She laughed with genuine enjoyment, which made Gerald blink and draw back ever so slightly, and the moment he finished speaking she talked about something else, in the manner of bringing the conversation back to a serious theme. The sheikh and Creed were grotesque figures for her, with possible comic, but not conceivably serious, lives, and she heard Gerald as a voice in the same grotesque chorus. When he said that the sheikh was responsible for 'one of the best programmes of social legislation in the Middle East' she ducked her head forward and spluttered with laughter, and imitated his accent with a mock-solemn face --- 'seeowshaul lugisleeshun!'

Dick briskly quoted some figures about the number of malaria cases actually treated in Rubath and the number estimated to exist --- about 'a ninth of one percent' were treated --- and the earning power of the average peasant which was less in a week than that of a London clerk in an hour. Granville came in briskly with the argument that in this case money wasn't used much in the villages of Rubath and the peasants out there didn't wear bowler hats to work and take the underground; that the figures for Rubath were still probably better than those for most other Middle Eastern states, including those with nationalist governments elected by 'the people' and all that. This started the old recurrent anger between them, a hot flame like a sudden intimate sign, recognised simultaneously.

"That doesn't justify it!" Dick cried.

"But why don't you talk about all the other states as well?"

"I do!"

"What, all the time?"

"I'm talking about a state of affairs! That's the state I'm talking about!"

"Anyway ---" Granville's anger made him flush. "What exactly are you getting so het-up about? What's all the emotion for?"

Dick's mouth opened with surprise. It was certainly an odd question coming from Granville: unprecedented, in fact!

5 "Do you really mean to say," Dick asked him, "that you don't know what we're getting het-up about?"

Dick's gaze made him feel ashamed, and he faltered. "Well, I don't, really. I'm not saying you're wrong. I'm asking. What is it, exactly?"

There was a pause during which everyone at the table was still.

"Well," said Dick, "it's because people have been killed."

"But people are always being killed."

"Yes, but this has come to our notice. It represents one set of human beings being cruel to another set, in the most cynical way. It's the most frightfully cynical cruelty. Don't you think that's something to get het-up about?"

He was flushed and pouting again. "No!"

"No?" Their voices were quiet; they nearly all joined in with Dick. "No?" And Dick put up his hand in a helpless, resigned gesture, letting it fall again limply, leaving it to the others to form their judgements. "Don't you, really?"

Granville noticed in his eyes, too, a gleaming compassion, soft and yet direct, light-blue; and again he was aware of shame. But he was

was fixed into an attitude now and he wouldn't budge, in much the same way as Dick had been in the Hamlet discussion, provoking hostility with deliberate, self-hurtful defiance.

"Oh, well, Pip, if I didn't know you I'd say you were pretty far gone. But I do know you and I know what you've just said isn't true!"

Granville was pleased and flattered but in the interests of pride kept the pout and frown on his face; they would have to stay there for the time being, until he could make a decent withdrawal.

The discussion passed away from him and he was left to his own thoughts. He was disposed to believe that this state of compassion in Dick was the equivalent of his own 'orang-utang' condition: how much worthier it was then, to have this mercy in one instead of the blind rush of feeling he was acquainted with in himself! He looked at Dick again. There is was, a genuine pity like a light in his face! And confronted by this Granville had the same kind of recoil Dick had had in the Hamlet discussion when confronted by Pinkie's passion. Which of their passions would lead to a more ordered world? which would lead to the greater quietness? He was inclined to say Dick's. There was a steady line in it; there was no danger of anyone getting hurt!

But there was a snag here. Every day there were reports of violence in the paper. Why didn't Dick feel pity every day? He couldn't possibly do so! Didn't that make it spurious? His pity was a poor mental thing! But how could that be? Granville had once noticed how, during a quarrel with Hanni, Dick trembled in exactly the same way as he himself did with Pinkie; it had given him a wonderfully sweet sense of equality in the flesh! He only realised now how much he'd always taken for granted that Dick's feelings were weaker than his. But how could

person seemed to take for granted as the normal way! He would have to be strong as well, to keep harmony, informing himself about every step he took. It was no longer adequate for him to exist in himself, letting his moods come and go, forming his ideas about other people and their actions in a flowing way that was simply a continuation of his moods. Now he had to have a clear picture of other people, deduced, when their behaviour wasn't clear, from himself. He had to take their interests into mental consideration, whereas, before, his natural sense of their presence had done that for him. Now there had to be a conscious sense of relation. He had to listen to them alertly and then furnish his reply, in a kind of set give-and-take that wasn't a natural give-and-take of the heart that came easily, but on a different level, with a different rhythm; there had to be an acute mental awareness of the other person, as to what was going on in his mind, and what picture he had of you. Your privacy was suspended; and the mind took on a planning activity, mapping out the form of the conversation, trying to find interesting and informative things to say. But in Abbott's Road the conversation needn't be at all informative; it could go on in a kind of monologue, one person taking over from another. In Abbott's Road thinking-before-you-spoke was ungracious; in this way working class manners were more gracious and subtle than middle class, and much nearer the aristocratic. The rule in Abbott's Road was that having silent thoughts behind your words was disrespectful; the mind throbbed on behind the words in a non-thinking way, as a man's eyes blazed in a non-seeing way. Talk was a state of being in Abbott's Road, not mental conclusions. It flowed from the mouth without thought of performance. But in the middle class world it was like making announcements: ideally, if you wanted the most attentive audience, your announcements

~~if they took a fancy to her.~~ The madames were always calm and humorous; capable women past their youth. And they held Ismail Beg in esteem. They would settle him comfortably in an armchair, however drunk he was, and clap their hands for a bottle of brandy, putting little bowls of nuts in front of him, and hot fried chicken-livers. He would pull the girls close to him when they came in and put his hand up their skirts to give them a pinch and make them scream; he would jump up and do a grotesque dance with his eyes closed; towering above everybody, snapping his fingers and moving his head sideways like the girls in the cabarets. He pissed over the bonnets of the cars outside while the chauffeurs --- 'dogs-sons-of-dogs' --- stared at him heavily from inside, afraid to say anything. And sometimes he made a strange yell that filled the narrow alleyways of the brothel quarter, rising and falling, like a cry that might be heard in the mountains, among the tribesmen. He boasted; he said he could pick up a handkerchief from the ground with his teeth while at full gallop on horseback, and he'd won many bets doing this in Kurdistan! He was a warrior, a prince --- hence, the name Beg --- greatly respected, feared, hated by the 'dogs-sons-of-dogs'; And an influence on the government, a friend of the king; adored by his wife; unhappy! He had one weakness, he said, and smiled, leaving Granville to think what it was. If he intended sleeping with one of the women he would go out alone and not call on Granville. He kept his wife under more or less lock and key, afraid of a 'dog-son-of-a-dog' getting into the house and making love to her. Sometimes he leaned out of his bedroom window at night and fired shots into the garden, thinking there were men below. Unlike the other women in Basrah, his wife didn't wear the veil; she came from Beirut, the daughter of a merchant who spoke French, and she smarted all the time

the long, blueish scars on his leg from the war.

"What are they?" he asked.

"Oh, haven't you seen them before?" Granville said casually.

"I was wounded."

There was a pause and he sensed a stiffening on Dick's part.

He looked up.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Nothing. But, you know," Dick went on in a slightly trembling voice, "I've got no sympathy for that at all. Did you expect me to have?"

"No. Why?"

"Well, I'm rather surprised at myself! But you went out to murder people and that's what you got."

He pulled on his trousers quickly. "Yes, that's what I got." His anger was up at once, but this was the first time Dick had made a frontal attack on him, and the anger was diminished by surprise. "I didn't ask for sympathy!"

Dick was glaring at him in an unnatural way, and he felt quite frightened for a moment.

"What's bitten you?" he asked, calm again.

"Nothing. You attack people often enough, don't you?"

"What's that got to do with it?"

"I mean why be surprised when I do?" Dick said.

"I'm not! You've got the right!"

"That's what I was exerting, old sport --- the right!" Dick's ease of manner had returned; his eyes were genial again. And he left the room with, "Well, I'd better look for the old woman."

Granville told Pinkie about this later and she said that Dick was

probably brooding over what he'd said after the Hamlet they'd seen. "After all, you're not one to pull your punches, are you, sweetheart?" she said with a quick, critical glance at him. Dick was frightfully sensitive, she added, and although he liked to give the impression of being balanced he 'brooded on hurts' for a long time without saying a word, and was full of 'the most awful doubts about himself.' Granville 'built people up too high' and then thought that only a 'God-almighty blow' would knock them down, whereas a 'tap' would do the job! He had a passing impression that this wasn't her true style of speech; the second such impression he'd had recently.

He expected to be stung by what Dick had said but instead he felt light and grateful; perhaps it was because Dick had shown his hand, and he could now see him in his heart, as a fellow-sufferer. He went out and bought a bottle of good wine, then phoned him to say it was waiting for him whenever he liked to call, as a reward for 'taking attacks so well'; to be drunk on the premises or not, as he wished! Dick's voice at the other end was quiet and gracious: "What a nice thought, Pip! Yes, please, teacher, I'll be there, Monday, and we'll go fifty-fifty!" On Monday evening he came full of smiles, and they drank the bottle together, sitting in the music-room.

Dick told him that, in view of the conversations they'd had during the crisis, he now put him down as 'a romantic supporter of ancien regimes everywhere.' It was a familiar theme, he said, of 'justifying poverty and distress --- other people's of course --- on picturesque grounds!' Granville wasn't unlike those 'Arabophils' Hanni sometimes came across at the foreign office --- who when they went out to the Middle East found 'dignity' in the Arabs and then hobnobbed with the dirtiest rogues among

them. Dick spoke pleasantly, gazing at him with light eyes, smiling, simply putting the propositions before him for rejection or agreement.

"Whenever there's something to say about henna-marks on Abu Kath'm's brow," he went on, "or the call-to-prayer that blaers down the dirty streets, or the stink of the river at night in the summer months and all that caper, you say it! But as far as Arab schemes to change Arab life gō, even elementary ones such as irrigation of the desert, or plans to introduce wide roads and hospitals, you've got nothing to say at all!"

Granville shrugged. "Well, all I can say is that I don't belong to the romantic school!"

"All right, tell me why not. You agree, first, that only talking about the stinks and the henna-marks would be romantic, don't you?"

"Yes," Granville agreed doubtfully.

"Well, then, tell me what else you think about over there! Tell me one realistic element that comes into your thinking about Arab life."

"I can't." Again he shrugged. But then he added, "In my friendship there, perhaps."

"No, I won't let you get away with it, old sport! Your friendships won't clear up the trachoma in the villages and decrease the child mortality-rate."

"Oh, I agree there."

"So you are a romantic, Pip!"

"No!"

"But why not?" Dick persisted, seeming pleased at Granville's lack of resistance but also curious.

"I don't know! I can't tell you!"

Dick laughed and took another sip of his wine. "You talk just

1914 war, and had been responsible for a deep hole in the divan downstairs in the music-room, which had come from a house in Carlton Terrace where the grandmother had lived for the war-years, it being so conveniently near the war office. Granville had gazed at it in wonder after she'd told him, trying to imagine the grand and fabulous actions of that world before his birth, and the magnificent bedroom with rose-coloured silk overlays, and the immense lace curtains hiding the windows, in an unsubstantial Carlton Terrace where the houses gleamed and towered like rocks of immutable sugar, and where the hum of the traffic --- or the clip-clop of hoofs --- was softened by tall trees!

Pinkie told him that in fact Maine and Nancy, as the grandmother was called had always made love in a box-room full of cobwebs, in the servants' quarters; her grandfather, she said, being a 'rather vague' old boy!, always thought the pounding 'above stairs' was a Zeppelin raid! One night the bombardment was so loud that he decided to go up on the roof and 'have a look', and he came across Main in one of the upstairs rooms, in his Blues, though he was supposed to be fighting on the western front; "What's it like up there, Maine, old boy?" grandfather asked, and Maine replied at once, "Much too hot for you, sir! Better stay downstairs!"; and they both went down to the cellar for a drink. Maine said he'd 'dropped in to have a look at the raid on the roof', as the war office roof was 'crowded', and her grandfather weemed quite satisfied. The raids had gone on long after the Armistice, which her grandfather had thought was 'just like the Germans'.

When Pinkie told these stories the men in them were nearly always vague and bewildered, so that one wondered how public life had ever been carried on at one time. But this vagueness helped to cast a legendary

warmth over them as well. Nearly every article of furniture they'd got from Aldercote had a story attached to it. The divan with the hole helped to give the music-room its glow, making it seem watched over by the past, and also as if it were continuing the past now in its glowing colours; the room had an extra dignity and presence. It made him think of heavy curtains, and love-letters written in a large, generous, untidy hand; so different from the careful, educated little scrawl he had taught himself. But it was more than a thought; it was almost a memory, seeming to lie in the room. Much was due to the curtains in the bedroom, too, with their sad monkey. And in the book-shelf there was a collection of Maine's letters and memoirs, written in a halting and oddly meek way, with much more tender feeling and doubt, Granville thought, than the letters he himself ever wrote or received! Something had gone out of us; we couldn't weep any more like those men; yet we thought of them as blustering and hard --- military men who rode rough-shod over their women and servants, and had sent battalions to their slaughter! Yet they had this peculiar meek dignity. He came across a note one day, slipped into the Memoirs, yellow and faded, one corner inexplicably burned, from Maine to Nancy Grysham, from General Headquarters in France, dated November 18th, 1915: 'My own darling Nanky,' it said, 'dined at the chateau last night, quietly toasted your health at the very moment, would believe it, when my host referred to Nancy, the town, in French! Rushing this off to catch the bag. Big push starting soon, your own Ted. P.S. Please tell Mamma to send chocolate biscuits!!!' Maine always announced a push some time before it happened, to give German spies, Pinkie said, 'a sportsman-like hint'. Sometimes he even gave the exact day and hour. "At dawn the day after tomorrow," he would write, 'the big show starts'.

The past gazed on him from that letter as it gazed on the music-room. He felt he had to join up with this past, by his development; he didn't know quite how. But he couldn't forfeit what these men had had. If he'd been a Grysham it would have been easy; the gruff tone of the Grysham males would be in his voice now, and their glaring, impersonal gaze would be somewhere in his eyes; he might be like Nigel, who was more on the classical or what Pinkie called the 'gilt' side of the family. He wouldn't have been just one single person sitting in a kitchen, trying to make out where his personality lay and what the world was made of! The past would have been in his flesh: people would have said, 'That's just how his grandfather looked!' Life wouldn't be just here and now! Nor would his own life stick out like a sore thumb; he'd be one of the shadows of the house, that came and went, among the other shadows of the past that had come and gone in their time. The glow would be that of the past and future as one presence, absorbing everything!

Sometimes he felt he was in a mystical association with these men, through Pinkie. There was a scrap of a letter he'd seen from one of her uncles, Clive, who'd been killed as a boy at Ypres in a dawn-attack: 'Dear Mums, my boots are cracking again, and could you send some notepaper, also, dearest darling, I lost the precious lanyard.' Like a tiny city! With such a yielding innocence! No brittle mind-work going on! Only this golden, unquestioning belief! They'd all had such delicate voices compared with ours, so rich and full of heart, so rambling and soft. Everything had been spoken without caution or fear, then. There'd been such openness. But we were hemmed in all the time; our feelings bubbled over and simmered and made endless distortions.

People had been the be-all and end-all of life then --- thrilling,

without preparation, whatever the words were!

"Isn't it difficult for an English woman --- moving about freely, that sort of thing?" Deryk asked him.

"Well, it isn't easy but you get more and more women without the veil. They're quite used to seeing English women. They think they're all mad anyway."

"Oh!" Deryk chuckled in a breathless way. "And you work with Arabs, do you?"

"Oh, yes!"

"It must be a wonderful life, Philip," Deryk said quietly.

They came to a stone bridge with fat pillars where there were people leaning on the parapet gazing down into the water, silent. The stream was very still below, touched at the edge by willow branches. The sunlight cast the design of the pillars on to it, and these shadows trembled with the breeze sometimes; or a fish passed swiftly across.

"Are they trout?" Deryk said, peering down.

"They look like it!"

Two or three fish darted under <sup>at</sup> the bridge, their bodies silvery blue. ~~Further on they could see boats out on the Serpentine, moving slowly, without a sound from any of them; nearer the bank there were toy yachts, their sails a dazzling white as they went up and down on the tiny waves; far on the other side they could see people diving into the water at the Lido, white bodies streaking down and making a splash, with the trees where he and Hammi had sat making a dark cave-like hollow behind.~~

They came to a man launching a toy ship from the bank, with a crowd watching him. The little vessel had three funnels and was worked by radio. Some of the people watching were dressed for the office, in

→

hill were  
steeply unfenced,  
smooth & green, &  
the warmth of the  
sun had melted  
but in the hollow  
full of hot,  
dusty scents

dark winter suits. The man started the engine by pulling at a piece of cord, then he pushed the boat carefully away, giving it a final little shove with the tips of his fingers; he was a small man with a wrinkled, pale face and freckled hands; utterly absorbed in his task, the stub-end of a cigarette forgotten in the corner of his mouth, brown and dry. As the dignified little ship went smoothly out, keeping a straight course and sending out a surf on either side, he bent down to the radio, which had an aerial and three or four dials. And then he controlled the boat's direction, so that it moved out heavily, as if massive, still going a straight course; but then it veered heavily round, gleaming in the water. The port-holes and cabin windows flashed as it turned, and all the time the man kept his head bowed, only lifting his gaze slightly to look out for other boats, his hand on the dials. The only noise from the lake was the muffled bumping of an oar now and then on a rowlock, far out, and the flapping of the tiny yacht-sails.

Again Granville glanced at Deryk and was surprised to see that he was rapt and fascinated like every one else in the crowd; again he was like a child.

"He must be a happy man, don't you think?" Deryk said with a smile. There was the same wistfulness Granville had noticed before; he was bereft of a tangible self and looked extraordinarily lonely.

"Do you enjoy living in London?" Granville asked him as they walked away.

"Well, it's awfully wearing sometimes but the holidays are good --- I do get long holidays, that's one advantage of teaching!" And then, having said this little bit about himself, he turned to Granville with a final air, as if drawing a curtain, and made his little smile that seemed

to say, "But my life's just a game, what about yours?"

Granville felt suddenly elated --- he would really talk to Deryk, he'd get him to tell him about his life and fears, he'd dig further and further down, why shouldn't they be friends, why shouldn't he explore things in this way, why not cut through all this dreariness and formula and set talk that governed everything, that gripped England like a deadly paralysis and which you could see in people's faces! What was there in the air, against that exploration?

They'd come round the park full circle to where they'd met and the children still played. It seemed to finish the conversation, too. They walked on to Alexandra Gate, strolling. They saw two chestnut horses on Rotten Row, under the trees, with women riders in elegant top hats, turning and rearing slightly, their flanks close together, the sunlight going over them in dazzling yellow spots as they kicked up the sand, seeming not to move by their own wills but to be in an airy, floating motion like the brilliant shadows all round them.

Well! He and Deryk turned to each other to say good bye. So nice to have met! What about Hester, when was she going to call Beatrice? Then they must both come over! Yes, and Deryk must bring Beatrice over for dinner one evening, Hester would love --- and so forth. He hardly knew what he was saying or what he was hearing. He only had an impression of Deryk's face as gentle and solicitous again, smoothing the path, always smoothing the path!

They put out their hands and gave each other a final smile.

"Be sure to give Beatrice our love!" Granville cried, in a last sudden access of affection. "Hester's been meaning to phone for a long time!"

"Do come round and see us! Mummy's going to be so excited when I tell her!"

They walked away in opposite directions --- he chose the opposite direction though he was heading the same way as Deryk --- and then turned to wave at each other simultaneously. Granville caught a glimpse of his long pale face again, and his pale fingers as they waved delicately, flickering above Deryk's head for a moment. Then he was gone.

Fin

~~Pinkie's~~ <sup>uncle</sup> Maimbury, had a <sup>mellow</sup> ~~sparkling and~~ golden quality

that put people at ease ~~right away~~. It was ~~this~~ perhaps ~~that~~ Deryk was striving for <sup>this</sup>. Why didn't he attain it? He didn't ~~quite~~. There was something grudging in him --- he and Beatrice beckoned you inside but that was also a good way of making you feel shut out as well, especially as there was no inside! All they did, really, was create a little fable, and then despise you secretly if you fell for it.

But Maimbury was whole: a still, slim, quietly gracious man with <sup>an</sup> unaffected <sup>self-</sup>assurance, touched with pallor as his son Wynbers; <sup>was.</sup> only there was more bite to his gaze --- he'd made himself one of the richest men in the country and pulled off a good many brick deals. He <sup>was a gentleman at home & a rascal in business.</sup> when Beatrice was 'pure Trade -- soap, it & all. She came was 1911 aristocracy! but his mother was a Crisham, a bit too <sup>to get rank from soap; Maimbury was a soap firm</sup> expensive for true blue blood, and the family said, but good to dine off.

<sup>rank</sup> He kept his tall London house, that shone like a great white tooth in the sunlight, partly as a <sup>family</sup> monument ~~for them~~ and partly as a <sup>family</sup> restaurant --- <sup>like Pinkie</sup> ~~they~~ came in ~~their~~ muddy shoes and dirtied his carpet, ~~Pinkie said~~, and belched loudly after meals, <sup>e</sup> to the horror of the butler who was also ~~1911~~ and was fool enough to think that aristocracy and delicate manners could ~~ever~~ go together!

Well, to some extent they did go together in Maimbury. He'd grown up in both worlds --- a bankers' world on the one hand and the old lingering world of the country estate (supported by the banks) on the other. He was the effective head of Pinkie's side of the family. Everyone came to him for advice and, of course, money. They brought their bastard children for him to support, and used his name when they were in a tight spot. Family conferences took place between him and Beatrice, who knew better than anybody where the family needed bolstering up and patching. They were always trying to keep the family together. But the family didn't want to be kept together: not unless they could see the money in it! As for a sense of aristocracy, they had absolutely none --- they didn't know what people meant!

Pinkie had a childish, romantic admiration for Maimbury: it was like her love for Nigel, only Maimbury --- 'Nicky' --- was a debonair figure who 'arranged' everything; he belonged to the world of affairs, and Nigel to nature.

The first real family event after Granville had married Pinkie was lunch with him. And it was an extraordinary event because it showed Granville a world he'd never known before even in his wildest imaginations, an invisible world which Pinkie had renounced in herself. He was always conscious afterwards that she'd renounced the England in herself, the unconscious and dreaming part of her blood, for which she could see no use in the world.

The moment Maimbury had walked across the carpet in the hush of the hotel-lounge Granville felt at ease, with a strange, immediate, involuntary change of feeling as if the man had brought a new golden light in with him, coming suddenly through the revolving glass door, reading

softly, waving his hand in a casual movement towards Pinkie. He wore his raincoat open and carried an old trilby hat; Granville remembered the way he swung this hat, with an oddly childish and graceful abandon, so that it was like a school-cap for a moment. His eyes caught Granville's attention next: they were wide-set and still, remarkably placid, as if their physical shape had been determined slowly by quiet, good thoughts. And their original shape seemed to include a smile, which asserted safety and calm at once. It was a light, wondering quality, and dominated them all the time they were at lunch. It put Pinkie in a specially gentle and courteous mood, bringing out that invisible element that brooded and slept in her --- the ecstatic, thrilling, wild, half-choked way of talking that made her lips moist and full, and put lost, distant, shining vagueness in her eyes as if she was looking back across centuries and everything grand that had ever happened in the country was happening in her again and as if a natural authority and dominance lay in her body which only had to be called out, like the rustle of a silk dress and candlelight and the flash of eyes in the dimness! She and Maimbury made the crowded Oxford Street outside distant, rotten, dead and foul, an idiot dream sprayed on the earth like a stink and left to lie for a few decades, not more, before it was smashed to pieces by better hands than had put it there.

Maimbury had taken Pinkie by the hand warmly and spoken in a low, easy voice that at once seemed to establish endless time --- "Hester, how are you?", with a quick glance at her to verify she was well. Then he turned to Granville, his eyes measuring him for a moment in a mild, rather passive way, without scrutiny, absorbing him with an unwatchful calm, and said to him shortly, man to man, "How do you do?" Through the

whole lunch Granville kept glancing at Pinkie because of her metamorphosis into a tall, graceful, attentive creature, gazing before her in a dazzled way --- into her real self. She had a dark suit on with a red silk scarf loose round her neck which made her face glow and her skin pale and smooth, in a dramatic contrast. She could have been one of the great women of the past --- a Holland or Devonshire! It was extraordinary what effect his presence had.

Maimbury's hair was slightly grey at the edges and this made the casual vigour of his body all the more striking. He had a firm, lean face, weathered and lined; everything led to his eyes. As they went into lunch he snapped his fingers and called out "Boy!" sharply to one of the pages, then told him to 'take the gentleman's coat'. For a moment Granville had been surprised, and had stood still in the carpeted lobby --- 'The man means me!' he thought. It seemed to him then that Maimbury had subtly established equality between them by saying that --- by making a double announcement, to the page and himself. And the page raced towards him, even before he took Maimbury's coat.

Inside the dining room they were handed over to the head waiter, who said quietly, "This way, milord," and led the way briskly between the tables, whispering to another waiter in a brittle, narrow-eyed way, "Tell Joe quick --- Maimbury!"

Seats were drawn back from their tables in the corner, they all sat down, and Maimbury took the leather-covered menu in his hand. He glanced down at it and stroked his mouth thoughtfully, leaning on his elbow. "Now what shall we have?" he murmured. Granville said nothing. He was used to being confused by wine-names and dish-names at that time, so he decided to leave the talking to Pinkie. She always knew what she

wanted and said so, while he would order the same dish as someone else at the table, saying to the waiter after a pause, "I'll have the same!" Then he just hoped the food would be all right. Once he'd ordered escallop in this way --- it was one of the few dishes he knew --- and he got a heap of fish in a sea-shell instead of what he'd expected --- veal! He'd looked down at the fish in a bemused way, trying to reconcile it with his idea of veal, fried in breadcrumbs, and wondering whether the waiter had misheard him or if his leg was being pulled. Then he'd caught sight of the card and saw under FISH the word scallop and assumed this must be it. Apparently, you could use the word for both veal and fish.

Another time, when he was at the T.I.M. training school, he'd been invited to lunch by one of the specialists in Arab affairs. The man had small, gleaming, kindly eyes but he only spoke when he had something intelligent to say, a mannerism which always frightened Granville. Suddenly, between courses, he looked at Granville in a calm, rather patriarchal way and asked, "Will you share some plovers' eggs with me?" He decided to nod and smile, as if the thought had occurred to him, too. But he had no idea what the words meant! He thought it might be a wine --- something like 'Plaver Seggs'! It seemed all right -- 'Plaver Seggs '45'. And then the little mottled eggs came, six of them, and he ate three of them with a panic-stricken show of relish.

After a pause Pinkie said to Maimbury, "Well, I don't know a thing about wines for a start, Nicky. So you'd better do the ordering." There, it was perfectly simple! You just had to say it! And Maimbury replied, "Would you like me to order the whole thing?" Granville answered, "Yes, that'd be lovely!" So homely, this idea of the

host ordering for everybody! Maimbury gave him an appreciative little glance.

Granville had noticed for the first time in a restaurant of this kind that he felt no apprehension, nor a sense that he must hand on every word said to him in case he was guilty of a breach of manners. He sat easily in his chair, his elbows on the rests, and actually thought about what he was saying --- this was perhaps the most amazing thing for him, to actually think in a public place with the same unhurried reflection as he did in private! The table seemed to belong to them, their own, and though the hall clattered and hummed with conversation, the other tables seemed far away, and the streets outside were so remote as to be unimaginable.

He'd forgotten now what they talked about. But an extraordinary graciousness had flowed from Maimbury; it was something rooted and fixed in him, a blessed mark, that could never have been imitated or learned. Granville was astonished how, within a few moments of being in his presence, he felt not only at his ease but washed clean of guile and baseness; it actually seemed, by contrast, that at other times he'd learned to dislike himself! For he settled so comfortably --- not proudly or vainly --- into his own frame under Maimbury's gaze, and he observed that Pinkie was doing the same; Her sentences were like trenchant little edicts, uttered blindly, as if from the past, with the vagueness of the past round them, caught in a glow, dramatic, making the present moment seem only a contribution to the slow, legendary movement of time far beyond them. And her red scarf marked this more strongly. It was something in Maimbury's smile, and in the soft gaze of his eyes that carried no advance-image of the world but waited in good will for the world to

declare itself. Granville only said what he wanted to say, and his silence didn't feel hedged-in and intimidated. It was such a relief --- actually being with somebody in a public place and yet keeping intact, without fear! In an epoch when being in public meant losing intactness, in the roar of a city! Had the world always been like that? Was it only us, in our world, who underwent a strange psychological shock when we went into the company of other people, and uttered things we hardly knew or recognised, and then, afterwards, felt a sense of betrayal, that we'd departed from ourselves, unawares, and lost the road, as if we'd been bewitched, and odd public statements had been put into our mouths from the air? Was the usual air infectious nowadays? And was Maimbury free of that?

Granville had the momentary enchanting experience when he was with Maimbury of discovering goodness in himself --- not extra and above what he was in himself---- it was simply a recognition of the ordinary goodness every man had, as if hitherto he'd been given a false story, that there was no goodness in the ordinary state, no natural goodness inherited by everyone!

There were even all sorts of ways of talking and moving which had never appeared to him before; as if hitherto he'd been in the grip of fear, and had been paralysed by the gaze of other men, not consciously any more but in a manner almost physical, certainly automatic, like goose-flesh in sudden cold; sometimes it seemed that he could deduce the presence of other men near him, without seeing them, by this automatic response of the flesh! Indeed, it appeared to him that the whole of his life, apart from the interlude in Sussex, had been in a state of fear! Long ago, he'd forgotten what natural behaviour was like, and now he more

or less accepted a state of self-suspension as the price to be paid for being in public! And now, through Maimbury, he became aware that this might be true of most other people, too: it might be the state of our world. With Maimbury he said whatever thoughts came into his head, as if they were from a mysterious source --- mysterious even to him --- and not open to the limiting judgements of men; it was a strange freedom he had never known before, and he was less willing to say afterwards that he lived in a free epoch; for the flesh was in chains, it was chained to this throbbing public life that went round in a circle and caught us up like a St. Catherine's wheel, stretching and torturing us, twisting our faces and shooting out our hands in peculiar, unwilled gestures! The self was more or less in abeyance with Maimbury: he was simply a man, Pinkie was simply a woman; there was simply the world, no 'inner' or 'outer', no 'private' or 'public', but people sitting together to eat! Not was this a primitive sense, of having got behind civilisation to a supposedly untouched and intimate state; it was the reverse --- far in advance of anything primitive; it was actually a sense of civilised people --- not clever ones, or terrifically energetic ones, or demoniacally astute ones, but civilised ones in a golden way, in whom reason wasn't a faculty of the brain but a sweet power of curiosity and light! That was in Maimbury's face. There were no marks of fear!

Pinkie had once showed him a photograph of Maimbury as a child, standing in a tall hot-house with the rest of his family, dressed in knickerbockers: he had long, fair curls and the wonderful softness was already in his eyes. And it made Granville feel how seldom a child keeps his dream in our epoch, but is pinched and limited early, especially a boy, in recognition of the pitiless, dry symmetry of the public world

that has to be observed, requiring stricter gestures than natural ones ever could be, and only certain brain-calculations in place of thoughts, and hard pellets of 'fact' in place of the flowing truth and experience of life! Maimbury had kept his softness. Nothing had been damaged in him; so it was like a glimpse into more golden epochs, seeing him. he'd been allowed his own dignity from the beginning. Perhaps only girls could grow like that in our world; with their graciousness intact in them, and the light of dreaming still allowed in their eyes.

Granville remembered all too well in his own childhood how he had always tried to stop the graciousness in his face as much as possible, and to discourage the dream, in deference to a public world that never made a clear statement of its requirements, only seemed to turn a cold shoulder when he departed from this discipline into natural behaviour.

This was so wonderful in Maimbury's face --- that it had never been turned from its natural and sweet civilised development. Instead of civilisation being progress or industries or ethical presumption, or anything grandly intellectual and public, it was, in Maimbury, an intimate light that could only be passed from person to person; it was something to do with the heart, inimitable --- in every man it would be a different flame --- how extraordinary to think that once life had consisted of all these flames, intact, touching and burning and reflecting each other! How exciting it must have been before our epochs came into being! The flame was in Maimbury's movements, in the way he talked and smiled; there was nothing constructed about him; he simply had this shining presence, which couldn't leave him because it was in the shape of his face and the sound of his voice; Granville thought of it as 'extraordinary'; but suppose it was what men had inherited in the past as the ordinary course of things,

without thinking about it?

The marvel of Maimbury's presence --- for which Granville had no parallel or previous warning in his life --- was that it showed no trace at all of the 'higher world'. That was the revelation of Maimbury's lunch invitation for Granville! And he realised that Deryk did, emphatically, belong to the 'higher world': like Beatrice, he had not a gentle heart, but gentle manners.

And this light in Maimbury was something that could never have been invented or cultivated by one man alone; it could only have been inherited, and grown out of birth, through slow years of growing, in safety! Were we going to lose all that? Were we going to become simply separate citizens, each with his personality, but with nothing marvellous inherited? What Maimbury carried in his body and in his fine, restful eyes was a theme that had grown like a slow flower by the ingenuity of generations, and was a doctrine that couldn't be passed on articulately: it was a light known only by presence, and impossible even to give a name to because no single thing composed it, only the total life of one person! That was aristocracy: it wasn't class - namely, power, but a genius which no country, once given it, could ever forget, and beyond which, in simplicity and sweetness, it could never go. Aristocracy was only an image, caught for a moment; it wasn't truly a historical reality. The image was only passed on in glimpses. No principles safeguarded or hindered it. A man was it by his presence alone, it couldn't be purchased or learned or damaged: it could only be inherited.


Were we to have only bare records of it, only memoirs and country palaces open to the public? Were we to do away with the first image of our own souls? Could we inherit as well? Had the 'higher world'

reached the end of its historical task? Now a man had to create his own life! Would he do it in that most perfect of all images? It was all laid before us in the tales of kings, in the country houses that had never stirred from their first tranquillity: what an extraordinary inheritance awaited us if we could break our silence of the heart! But if we kept to the middle-class road, ashamed to be ourselves, because self was dark and secret, if we kept on joining movements and trying to make more movement, if we looked for the right society all the time, and the right principles, and the right safeguards for our children, if we let our selves of here and now die, broken by the noise outside that prompted us to join and spoke to us out of radios and stared at us in the morning from the newspaper and gazed at us from films, always drawing us to believe in a bigger and finer world outside which was only composed of people like ourselves, if we never turned to our own silence, never let that silence take its own time, never learned to take action from its sound root; if we never braved the accusation that we were useless or lazy or selfish, or out of the group, or hollow, or dead by virtue of our solitude: then we should inherit death, and our children would look into our public faces and read nothing! A great religious duty for the first time awaited not simply a few people but untold numbers.

~~his own so deeply that there was now no other way of seeing things.~~

~~But Abu Kath'm was inside the processes all round her. This~~  
~~didn't mean she lacked a mind. She had a quick, shrewd intelligence~~  
~~which showed in her eyes. But she didn't have a system of thought~~  
~~imprinted on her.~~

~~If the eclipse had affected him he would have said it was~~  
~~'nervousness due to the weather'. It would have been turned into a~~  
~~scientific type of concept, in which the body was a victim of influences~~  
~~from the 'outside'. Compared with Abu Kath'm, he thought about life all~~  
~~the time instead of actually perceiving and living it.~~

→ The comparison induced strange sensations in him; for a moment he  
 could see himself as the Arabs did: ~~strangely static, ~~quite~~, withdrawn~~   
~~and he seemed not really subject to the processes of life and~~  
~~death, but a spectator of them. The fact was, however, that these~~  
~~processes did still govern us. Therefore, he must have a distorted~~  
~~consciousness!~~

~~That evening, after the eclipse, there was a deeper silence in~~  
~~the house than usual. Kath'm the house-boy made a fire in the sitting~~  
~~room, for it was still cold in the evenings. There were no sounds from~~  
~~outside, only a dog barking in the distance now and then. Pinkie was~~  
~~reading the local newspaper for English residents. They'd planned to~~  
~~eat at the Cabala with one of the branch managers, but Pinkie had said~~  
~~she was tired and he'd called it off.~~

He sat gazing into the fire, thinking about the afternoon. It  
 was a matter that concerned him very closely, he knew that. Abu Kath'm  
 believed in God! As we believed in trees, say, or our own breathing;

these things simply were for us. And Allah simply was for her. The mind didn't enter into it. His vocabulary, 'believing in' God or 'feeling' God, put the matter wrong from the start. And he had to think through these words.

→ Pinkie went up to bed early and he stayed watching the last embers of the fire. Only a tall standing lamp was on, casting a dim red glow over everything. ~~The room was long and high with folding doors in one wall, which led to the dining room, and were opened only when there were guests. Curtains were drawn across them now to hide the rather ugly glass panelling, and they gave the room a shrouded, secret look, like a temple, especially now there was only the red lamp. He half-dozed. All evening he'd sat without a book. Then he became aware of a growing contentment in himself. He stretched out his legs, making a rustling sound on the rush mat, and settled further into his armchair. The fire was still hot and the room glowed with a wonderful subdued brilliance, the small black designs of the curtain standing out vividly, like designs on the wall of a mosque. He heard singing in the distance, with the thump of a drum. It was a servant in one of the consular gardens, perhaps. <sup>it</sup> The dumbuk made smart little raps, exciting and subtle. The song seemed not to be developing in time, but static, like an endless wail. His mind was asleep for a moment, in second place, contented. ~~The glowing room was like an indoor night, its objects fixed like stars, with that <sup>the</sup> breathing stillness of trees.~~~~

It was like having life in depth instead of movement; he was only aware of the present moment; but the present moment was endless, in depth, there being no sound of movement to recognise time by. This had a strange relevance to his other thoughts. Only his mind could have told him that

Cut 1/2

time was getting on, that bed was waiting, that Pinkie was already asleep. But for the moment there was only the present, like eternity captured. Surely the mind always brought the shadow of death over an experience, by announcing the horizon beyond present time? taking us out of the depth of eternity? Did Abu Kath'm really live inside present time? But we'd got broken off! We moved at a tangent all the time!

He felt drawn right into life, sucked down by the flow of the room and the distant, whining song. There was no death for the moment. The mind pointed out no frontiers.

The song ended, and his mind was roused again. He looked at his watch and was surprised to see it was past midnight. Pinkie was probably asleep by now. He decided to sleep in his own room, which he did whenever he worked late.

Before turning off the light he looked back at the hearth again, where there were the last dusty embers. The room was very still; long and brilliant. Did Abu Kath'm live all the time with the fullness of that moment he'd just had? Was that what real life was like? Was that why she had endless patience? Once he'd told her to guard the house all day while he was away, and she'd taken him literally, and had sat squatting on the doorstep for eight hours, until he returned, without the slightest impatience, her abba drawn close over her head.

He closed the door and felt his way along the corridor to the stairs; on the first landing there was a double window where he sometimes stopped to watch Abu Kath'm on the lawn below. The sky was bright and he could just make out her yellow hut, a dimly shining hump with shadowy trees behind it. And beyond, stretching into vagueness, lay the desert, a whitish mass that seemed to move, because it was hardly distinguishable

from the sky. He stared at it for a few moments, and it disappeared. Then he looked down at the garden again, a black oblong, and once more it became visible, like a moving shroud in the night. There wasn't a sound. No dogs were barking. On this side of the house he couldn't hear the singing. Yet he had no sense of solitude. He had the impression of actually breathing the night, the source of his breath being the same stillness that lay outside. He turned round to look at Pinkie's door on the next landing and saw that her light was out. His shoes scraped on the stone stairs, and he went up on tiptoe. He didn't want to disturb the silence. It had the same commanding integrity as during the eclipse.

He opened the door of his room carefully and could make out his sparse objects there --- the narrow bed by the right-hand wall, the desk under the window and the rush matting in the centre of the floor. It was simple, rather like a monk's cell. He didn't want to switch the light on but walked through the darkness on to the balcony that let from his room. A faint breeze came through when he walked out, touching his face. He could see the waste area below with its little mounds and craters, and the path between the palm trees that served for a road, its sandy floor shining dimly between the stiff leaves. A dog barked in the distance, then it was still again. The palm tree at the edge of the balcony tinkled for a moment, and the breeze made the sound of a distant wave, rising and falling back again. Everything was composed of shadow, furry and soft; even his hands were unsubstantial like dust, hanging at his sides.

He pulled the door closed again and went over to his bed, where he lay down, propping the pillow up behind him and pulling a blanket over

his feet. How paltry Abu Kath'm made his past thoughts about 'believing in God', in the Sussex days and after! God was for her --- it didn't matter whether you called it God or the sun, or what. For the first time in his life he'd glimpsed the other state of being, for which he'd been searching since childhood! That was why he'd thought about her all afternoon. He'd arrived at a turning-point in his life, as far as thinking went --- he was sure of that!

He tried to remember his earliest thoughts about religion. He'd been sent to St. Mary's in Abbott's Road every Sunday. What had happened? What had his thoughts been there? He racked his brains, trying to remember. At St. Mary's there were dark mahogany pews and fat yellow pillars on either side of the chancel; it was quite a handsome church, really. The idea had been to keep him out of mischief more than anything. But what had happened in his mind when he'd heard the words Christ and God? Had he ever believed in God as Abu Kath'm did? What had happened to his religion? And all he could remember now was a vague perplexity.

At first, 'God' had been simple, just a gentle presence at the edge of the roof-tops. The image had been dreamy, in the style of childhood. But then those confirmation classes had started, and here, he remembered, the problems had begun, when he was about thirteen. His perplexity had begun over Christ, whom he'd never really thought about before. Christ, too, had been a simple figure, like a marvellous elder brother. In his mother's prayers Christ had never been mentioned, only God and people. Now he heard about Christ in detail for the first time. He was raised up by the story, and he was as quickly flung down, into perplexity. And since the day of his confirmation, when a bishop had

come to the church and he'd taken his first --- and last --- taste of the wafer, he hadn't given the matter a deliberate thought. Nobody else had bothered. And the perplexity had remained. But it had remained hidden. Only now had he become aware of it.

The confirmation classes had been held on Sunday afternoons when the church was empty. A group of children sat in the front pew while a young clergyman from another parish talked to them from the chancel steps. At first Granville could hardly take his eyes off the clergyman's face; he thought he'd never seen such clear, good eyes in a person! They never seemed to show censure. And he noticed that the young man always spoke with a smile when he mentioned Christ. He smiled a little even when he was talking about Christ's death and how they didn't have to break his legs to quicken the end because he gave up the ghost early, while the two thieves still struggled on in the death-throes. He also told them how a soldier had thrust his spear into Christ's side, probably to make sure he was dead, and how there was a legend that a drop of the blood and water from the wound had fallen on to his face and he'd been cured at once of an eye-disease. Even when he spoke about the blood and water gushing out he smiled in a tender way. He had flushed, healthy cheeks and soft black hair, and talked in an easy way, his eyes resting on the children in equality, which struck Granville even then as wonderful in a grown-up, that he should be able to talk with equality to children.

By smiling when he told them about the last moments on the cross and how Christ had called into the darkness, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?', he made it all feel safe and even good: which was very strange.

The church itself had begun to feel a happier place! Before, it had been hopeless and sombre, a place where priests sniffed and haw-hawed through their vague sermons, and coffins were laid in the chancel, and grim, nervous couples were married, while the trams scraped and rumbled past outside. It was astonishing how the young clergyman could change it so! The sun seemed to shine in at the tall windows more, and the stained glass began to glow mysteriously. It began to look quite a lovely church, with its great clean beams and arches.

As the confirmation classes went on he began to associate the gentle look in the young man's eyes with what he was talking about, namely 'Christ'. And he listened more closely. He was determined to be like him if possible, to have those same good eyes. He wanted to be like that when he grew up, without suspicion or reserve. So many people in the streets outside had small eyes which twitched from side to side in a fixed, disbelieving watchfulness. He began to hate the streets at this time. They were hard, dusty, bleak corridors leading nowhere, grimy and yellow and grey. The trams creaked and clanged, and over everything lay a silence that had nothing gentle in it at all, no rhythm, but was simply a suspension, like a dead face. Even at thirteen he was jumpy and nervous, expecting accidents all the time. There seemed less and less to cling to in his life. The streets offered nothing. Life consisted of quick, unrelated events which didn't comprise a whole experience. It was a hard, disjointed dream.

Only in the countryside had he ever heard the real silence, that had a rhythm in it, like someone breathing. That was a comfort. But otherwise the gentleness in people's faces was his only comfort. When he saw someone 'nice', as Eve, Aunt May's daughter was 'nice', with her

sad, compassionate look, he had a terrific sense of awe. And the young clergyman was 'nice'. But this time there was more than a person. He felt 'Christ' behind it.

The young man talked about Christ intimately, as if he was close by, and Granville began to have a sense of Christ as actually being there on the chancel steps. The communion rail, the tasselled alter-cloth of crimson and silver, the gleaming altar of gold, seemed to be his home. It was a strange feeling, like discovering who these things belonged to, for the first time. The church began to feel like a house which the owner had just left, so that his golden presence was still in the air, in the ticking clock and the armchair.

He learned that confirmation would give them the right to eat of Christ's body and drink of his blood, symbolically, at the communion rail, for 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh of my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' The meaning of this was only vague for him --- idiotic, really --- eating flesh and drinking blood --- but his mind made a quiet acceptance and he thought of the communion as a silent meeting with Christ that was too far beyond the clutches of ordinary life to be examined thoroughly. Still, it wasn't simple --- not like the figure of Christ.

We must always remember, the young man said, that Christ willed his suffering and foretold everything that would happen to him. He had to show people what it meant to forgive and love. People don't believe words. They must have something to look at. And when they saw Christ dying above them on the cross they knew as they would never have known otherwise that he meant every word he'd said. Here was a man who had used himself as a living demonstration for other people --- used his own

body! 'Can you imagine that?' the young man asked. 'Do you wonder that his example has never left out minds since?' 'Though ye believe not me, believe the works,' Christ had said. 'And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

Without his crucifixion Christ would simply have been a preacher -- 'like me', the clergyman said with a smile.

But during the last few classes Granville began to feel puzzlement. For Christ wasn't 'nice' in the way he'd thought at first! It began to seem strange to him that his own mother and father should have sent him to church. There was a great anger in Christ, often against mothers and fathers. 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword,' he said. 'For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.'

Now how was it that his mother and father had sent him there, if Christ wanted to put him at variance with them? And how could the young clergyman tell him to honour and obey his mother and father? There was no mistake about it at all! --- 'If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' Yet the clergyman always said that Christ was 'good'. And his mother and father had sent him to church so that he too would be 'good'. Could you be good without following Christ? How could you follow Christ if you loved your mother and father? Look at the man who'd asked Christ if he might bury his own father before following him! --- 'Let the dead bury the dead,' Christ had said. 'He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.'

Did other people hear the same words? Or did they gloss over them in some way? Or perhaps they didn't know about them!

In one of these classes he asked a question about it. But the young clergyman was vague and seemed not really to understand him. He said something about Christ's calling being beyond even his 'nearest and dearest'. 'But how can it be good to hate my mother and father?' Granville thought. And if everybody were to do it to follow Christ, surely the world couldn't go on, because there'd be no families?

But the other children didn't seem worried. And the clergyman went on talking, with the same smile. And gradually he put aside his doubt. The church was still there with its gleaming altar and tall stained windows. It was all so much bigger than he was. It had been alive such a long time. No doubt there were reasons he didn't understand. It seemed impossible that so many grown-up people, including the vicar, could be wrong. Perhaps he didn't understand the archaic language of the Bible? And if the bread and wine of the communion were 'symbolical' for Christ's flesh and blood, why shouldn't Christ's words be 'symbolical' in some way? Perhaps Christ hadn't meant real mothers and fathers, and real brothers and sisters!

Only in the marriage at Cana was there a glimpse of a possible meaning. When Christ's mother reminded him that there was no wine, implying that he alone had the miraculous power to bring it, Christ said angrily, 'What have I to do with thee?' and 'Mine hour is not yet come.' And Granville felt a dim understanding of Christ in this mood. It was what he'd often felt with his own mother, when she tried to interfere with him sometimes. But then how could Christ possibly feel the same as he did? Probably the words didn't mean what he thought they did!

He took Christ to mean, 'What's it got to do with you?' But that seemed much too familiar! So he accepted the puzzlement, and then put it out of his mind.

And people didn't seem to care. His mother and father didn't seem to know much about what Christ said. And he had the idea that one didn't go to church after one ceased to be a child. Only old fogies went. So the question never meant much to him.

The bishop confirmed his class, and the wafer melted in his mouth with a remarkable swiftness, and he wondered where it had been manufactured. He sought a special holy taste in the wine, which he was told had been blessed, but the sip he took --- the cup was pulled away from him almost at once --- was too small for him to find out. There was a crowded church and anthems sung by choirs from all over London, he had feathers in his tummy, but all to a purpose he didn't understand.

He was sure, now, that there was something right in that first puzzlement. And he wanted to get to the bottom of it. It wasn't difficult now to imagine that the vicar had been wrong, and the young clergyman, too!

He remembered the Bible that lay on show downstairs under the silver-plated crucifix, belonging to Bertha, and he toptoed down to get it. The house was so silent that he could hear the rustling of his clothes as he walked. The Bible was one of those family editions with the words of Christ printed in red, and genteel paintings of the disciples. It hadn't been moved for nearly two years, and there was a faded place on the lace cover underneath. 'Well,' he thought, 'I never imagined I'd ever use this!' It was a little symbol of Bertha's stuffiness, and he'd

wanted to get rid of it, but Pinkie had stopped him, And now he picked it up with the same gingerly awe he'd seen in Kath'm's eyes whenever he'd passed it.

That night, pulling his desk-lamp closer, he read more or less haphazardly in it. He was amazed at how simple and true-sounding the story of Christ was. Why had he never been taught it, just as a story? He felt he'd stumbled on his own language again after years of silence, and was suddenly talking!

He even began to see Christ as a person. This was the first time he'd really read the gospels. Even now, as he read, absorbed and still, it seemed silly that he should be doing so. He wondered that he could be really interested in it! He realised that he'd always taken the language of the Bible as meaningless. It all had a kind of vague symbolical application --- a sort of poetry, not meaning much! And here he was reading the words actually as if other men had written it! And he found a story that offered no difficulties at all.

How was it that he'd been disinherited from this story, in this great epoch of education? when, once upon a time, for generation after generation, simple and illiterate people all over the world had found no difficulty in it? What a lot of effort his 'education' was costing him in life!

He began to think of Christ as intimately close to him, and not wrapped up in divinity. Only for a short time in the confirmation classes, moved by the young man's smile, had he felt that intimacy before. Since then, his education had taught him that he had no right to feel intimacy--- of all things --- with great historical figures!

He was amazed at how clearly he could see Christ --- like someone

standing in front of him, very youthful, with an extraordinary calm and sweetness. He could see him sitting in the temple writing in the sand absent-mindedly, with perfect repose, before the crowd brought the fallen woman to him, playfully, to see if he was fool enough to bless a whore. And he could see him standing up and saying angrily that if anybody in the crowd thought he was clean of sin himself he had the right to judge this woman, but not otherwise! He could see him again, always with this marvellous repose, lying on the couch before taking dinner with the Pharisee, and showing a certain care to the woman who bathed his feet in oil, another whore, while the Pharisee sarcastically asked him if he minded being anointed by a 'sinner'? He could see Christ at the well talking to the Samaritan woman in his leisurely, reflective way, arguing quietly with her. That was ridiculous to most Jews --- to talk to a woman about God and to a low Samaritan at that! But Christ was always doing that kind of thing. When somebody touched Christ once in the crowd, and he turned, Granville had the impression that he knew how he turned, the exact gesture. Christ stood so clear and fresh among people.

Christ was always talking to people in their lonely state, he noticed --- not in their importance. He called to men alone in themselves. 'Beware of men,' he said, 'for they will deliver you up to the councils.' 'When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.' No priest was needed. No family was needed. Only a man alone in himself. This was what made Christ's teaching last from one generation to the next, that it depended not on other people but on one man alone withdrawing into himself.

But the Jews had said no less since Moses --- that God was only to be found 'in secret'. That had been their strength, too, this gleaming

secrecy which nothing could touch. It was the silent dignity that had held the Jews together. And Christ inherited this dignity. The difference was that he said that every human creature was chosen by God. Not just the Jews! The Jewish gift must be given to all men! And this was the blasphemy in Jewish eyes --- to call even the wicked blessed, even the low! To call all of them children of God was offensive!

And all at once Granville saw the connection with his first perplexity as a child! Christ said it didn't matter that you were somebody's son or brother, or a man as opposed to a woman, or a Jew instead of a heathen, --- the state of your life was what counted! And if you loved those names instead of God, if you rested on your position in life, you were rotten! Christ put his life against the whole suffocating weight of status quo! Against this throbbing public life!

God was so high in Christ's time that no one dared even pronounce his name. Foreigners and uncircumcised people were excluded from His mercy. Women were unclean, excluded from the Passover. God the State - the high priest governed for Him.

Therefore Christ's teaching was treason as well. He talked equally to women and whores, to foreigners and heathen. Everybody had an equal power of penetrating to God --- equal even to the priest's! It was a devastating argument and in the end took the Jewish God to almost every race on earth.

In everyone, Christ said, however dirty or wicked or despised, there was that mysterious element of light and silence where he belonged to something that was beyond other men beyond even himself; and which couldn't be destroyed by other men! No special credentials had to be shown. You could even be a slave! Everyone, the most foolish and

ignorant person, had this absolute self-responsibility. No wonder the Jews were aghast --- or rather laughed and mocked!

' Every man had the power to choose between the light and the darkness. He always knew the difference, in himself! He was alone with his own conscience! The verdict of the priest made no difference. And the law made no difference, if your conscience was active! Only a man alone in himself was the judge of where the light of truth lay. 'He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.'

Hitherto in Granville's life the name 'Christ' had meant, more or less, 'love'. Very well, everybody agreed with love! And Christ had been talked about so many times, after all! Even the crucifixion seemed painless now, especially as 'Christ' was too lofty to engage your sympathies! He'd often wondered, like those who had stood about the cross and mocked him, 'Why couldn't he save himself, if he was really the son of God?' How could you feel Christ's pain as your own, if Christ was divine and therefore started off with an advantage over everyone else?

And that was the chief difference now. He saw Christ as a real person. Like himself! Before, he'd never been able to see exactly what had gripped one generation after another, for nearly two thousand years, in the story of Christ! In the Sussex days he'd understood for the first time that the Christian civilisation had spread across the whole of Italy, and then the whole of Europe and parts of Asia, planting a cross in hundreds and thousands of villages, but he hadn't been able to see how it had happened that so many people had been influenced! He'd only seen it as an historical movement.

But now he saw Christ through himself. Therefore the crucifixion was real to him. And, also for the first time, since he could see Christ through his own experience, he could see how extraordinary he was! Of course, if you started by saying that Christ was extraordinary and divine, there was no room for amazement. Only if you saw him as yourself could you be amazed.

Christ seemed to tell the story of a man's pain wherever that man was, whatever language he spoke, whatever epoch he lived in. He didn't waste a gesture! It was all so beautifully conceived, his own life, spread out like a story which he knew from the beginning. Opinion didn't touch him. He went about his death with an absolutely calm deliberateness, foreseeing every stage because he brought it about himself. And the story was discovered again in every generation as something fresh because it was revived in each man's experience, like a flower that while new had the same head as millions before it.

The word 'God' was easier for Granville. It meant the spell --- what had gone out of our lives! At dawn in the Sussex days, when he'd been on sentry-go, the whole earth had seemed to stir, and then the word 'God' had seemed suitable.

The truth wasn't supported by the number of men who held it. That was Christ! One man alone could hold the only truth in the world!

Granville felt a terrific self-vindication! He did have a place, then, in life, he did have meaning, he did know something without ploughing through exams and books and fighting to the top of the T.I.M. worm-world!

It was a doctrine of terrific courage, it raised the single man to a height unknown before! And this man could be anyone! His strength in the truth would come from beyond him, where there were no numbers or

power, but silence! He only had to give up trying to satisfy that little will in himself, or the will of other men. Then the stronger will would come through.

This is what Christ did --- he actually did it with his own life! Even when he said he was the son of God he didn't mean himself with his own little will --- which the Jews thought. When they accused him of blasphemy at his trial he asked them, wasn't it written in their own scriptures that 'Ye are gods', that all men were gods? And he was a man! He was any man! All men were the children of God! Therefore his own prayer began, 'Our father.'

Nobody really saw what he meant, apart from the women round him, perhaps. The disciples didn't see. You could tell that by the questions they asked him. They thought he was going to offer them something, in life: or they believed him like children listening to a fairy-tale. When he told them that people on top found it more difficult than others to be close to God, they couldn't believe their ears! The priests as well? 'And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth them again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.'

For the disciples he was just a messiah. That meant the man who'd bring glory to Israel again, the kingdom of God on earth, that sort of thing --- a fairy tale. When he told them one day that he would soon be dead, and seemed not to care, Peter refused to take him seriously! How could a man who had come to save Israel, get rid of the foreign troops

and so on, want to die of all things, before he'd taken one step towards it? How could you save the world by promptly disappearing from it? No wonder the ones on top laughed!

It was the same at the last supper. They didn't understand it was the last at all. He told them, 'A little while, and ye shall not see me.' But they didn't understand: 'They said therefore, What is this he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto him, Do ye enquire among yourselves of what I said, A little while? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament.'

The darkness of the cross wasn't what they'd expected. Two of them had asked Christ once whether, on his day of 'glory', they could sit one on either side of his throne! And death was such a baffling answer to that.

Christ's magic was that he didn't ask for any satisfactions to his personal will, not even leadership or dignity. He remained absolutely still even when they were calling up to him to save himself, on the cross.

The silence is deeper than the noise of men's ambitions and society and virtue and laws. A man has to wait for it, alone and still.

He remembered reading about the ancient world in the Sussex days, and finding no theme there that had any importance for him. But now things began to fall together. He was surprised how much dead knowledge there was in his mind. The moment it fell into the new connection it was alive.

The Jews had seen great empires collapse all round them, they saw that though they were always passed by as an unimportant little people on

the way from Egypt to Persia, they were the only ones to survive. They survived invasion, massacre, annexation.

Their God had a perfect, irresistible and consistent justice which men couldn't buy or change. He wasn't a bull or the sun or a man in the sky. He was silent, inside every man --- every Jew. And so He survived everything that went on outside.

In none of the other great civilisations --- Egypt, Greece or Rome --- was there this intimate link between what a man did in the silence of his thoughts, and the grace bestowed on him from beyond. That 'beyond' was harmonious, it was one thing, it was an order --- not various little gods quarrelling in the sky and hurling thunderbolts. The 'beyond' meant peace. It was on your side. That was the relief Christ took all over the world, all over the broken Roman empire --- from the Jews!

And of course we now took it for granted. Every one of us! The world has a meaning for us. Nothing is quite haphazard or accidental in our world! It is based on laws. And that sense of laws underneath life that never changed was the first lesson of the Jewish religion.

'How strange,' Granville thought, 'that I should have taken all these years to arrive at a simple definition of 'Christian civilisation'!' Yet it was so simple on the face of it! And slowly he was beginning to link together his own life, too. What else had his sense of a silent order in life been, in the Sussex days, when he'd begun to take walks alone, but what the Jews had given? And his sense of there being a spark in himself, without help from other men? Had he inherited this experience from Christ, unawares, as Christ had inherited it, only more vividly, from the Jews? He was beginning to discover the historical connection he'd been after since childhood!

In everybody, Christ said, there was a secret place beyond all men. That was the peace he offered people. Every man had a place where his own infinite integrity lay.

Moses had promised the Jews 'great and goodly cities'. It was the one respect in which God did reward men's interests. And Christ removed this last reward. His disciples expected him to come mounted on a charger at the head of an army, to remove the Romans. And, deliberately, he came in mounted on an ass. He did overcome the Romans. But not in the method of ambition. His story gradually travelled through the broken-hearted empire, like hope. The empire's roads and ship-routes, running across Europe and Asia, a vast act of ambition, became the roads and ship-routes his story travelled by. Slowly the meaning of what he'd said dawned on people, as it dawned on the disciples, who wrote the story down.

Christ died on a Roman instrument of torture, kept for criminals. He was laughed at while he was dying, his death wasn't important enough to be recorded officially. But he overcame an empire. By giving up ambition he overcame the most ambitious project that the earth had seen.

'So things can come about from the silent will of one man,' he thought, 'slowly through the years, working in the darkness unknown to the mind!' How the Pharisees must have laughed! He overcome Rome? And the world? A 'prophet' like all the others, with the same paraphernalia of disciples and miracles to catch the popular eye and parables and ominous quotations from the scriptures! Calling himself 'the son of God'?

'Well, they'd laugh the same today,' he thought. 'They want to see a plan for the future of mankind.'

But ordinary people went on living as they always had done, in

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with your mind. Go into your real life. What experience have you had of something utterly beyond you, for instance?' Wouldn't there be a clue in that?

The words 'divine presence' came into his mind. But it was only a phrase. And it had a lofty sound. He was sure the Jews hadn't meant by God what you could only get from an ecstatic experience. It must be an experience which came and went quietly, and unawares, even day by day. He had a conviction that he'd overlooked this experience all his life, because it didn't fit in with the allowed concepts of our epoch.

All of a sudden it seemed easy. Look at the way the room had appeared to him only a few moments ago, as being unsubstantial like dust!

~~The silence had seemed to turn everything into one unity! He'd stood on the balcony and felt that everything was dust outside, joined together like one shadow, including ~~himself~~ himself. And at the window on the landing, overlooking the garden, on his way upstairs, he'd felt he was actually breathing the stillness outside, and that the night was part of him!~~

He'd felt no solitude!

*It was the desert. Everything was dust - dust - shadow, himself, I was*

~~There was a presence all round him, that actually seemed to breathe! The wind had touched his face when he'd gone out on to the balcony, like a breath from that presence, so intimate! And the presence was invisible, but always there. One could come and go, and forget it, but it would always be there. It would be there after he died, and it was there before he came. It included him. He had come out of it. And the presence was inside him as well. He was most aware of it when he felt peaceful. It was a presence he could violate, too. For instance, he hadn't wanted to switch the light on, from a sense that it would~~

violate the silence. So there was harmony in the stillness. And it was possible to ruin this. If he'd talked or moved about noisily he would have ruined it for himself. The stillness would have become separate from him. His thoughts would no longer have followed each other at their own pace, in their own order. For his thoughts seemed actually to come out of the stillness. They were quite different from those thoughts which he had deliberately --- at the office, for instance. So there was a guide in the stillness, too, which you could follow or disregard, at will!

He thought back over it, again, quietly. Surely there --- only primitive, a mere beginning --- was the form of 'God'? His sense of a presence all round him, breathing, surely that was his recognition of

*→ He recognised*  
~~something alive, and yet inside him, apart from him and yet the whole of life? Surely that was a fumbling towards a definition of God, that the Jews had been the first to make? One God for the whole universe --- surely that was the feeling of things being a unity, with a presence behind it? The presence was invisible! It wasn't this tree or this touch of wind. These were only manifestations. So God was both invisible and intimate.~~

~~And it was a presence that lay <sup>you were</sup> before and after <sup>your</sup> one's life, and continued while <sup>to be</sup> one was unaware of it. God was 'eternal'.~~

~~The presence included <sup>your</sup> one's own life, too. One seemed to come out of it, and in death to be going back into it. <sup>For the first time in his life, the very first time, he felt created.</sup> This was the feeling of having been created. God was the creator.~~

~~And yet the presence was inside one as well --- it didn't simply include one. It was whole inside one. So God was to be found in secret.~~

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To P. 538

And if one followed the stillness one was aware of a harmony, in one's thoughts. That was where the Jews had made a moral connection. You could follow God at your own free will. You could consult Him, in secret. You could follow His guidance or not. What was this but Granville's feeling that the presence was in and all round him, with a pace and order of its own? What was it but the idea of 'eternal justice'? Only a man whose conscience was free could 'talk to God, or have harmony!

God didn't take rewards, Moses had said. God wasn't a man, or in the image of a man, nor was He any thing in our sense. He was 'spirit'. 'Of course,' thought Granville, 'how absurd it would be for me to ask the presence all round me to do something for me!' For the presence wasn't something he could see before him, or feel. It was underneath everything, the sense of there being something alive which wasn't limited to the things you could see and feel, like the balcony or the palm-tree, though it was in them also. It was pure spirit!

But those words 'pure spirit' had come to mean something lofty, like 'pure idea'. And he'd got to think through these words, and through the snares of the mind. He couldn't deny that when he stood in the silence he was aware of a force beyond him and yet in him! And men had given it a name. Surely 'God' was that name?

For the first time he saw a meaning in phrases that had always been empty for him --- 'God is spirit', 'the Creator', 'the God of peace', 'the God of Gods', 'the just God'. They could all be translated into his experience. Only those words had been stripped bare of flesh, and he had to keep this experience of a 'presence' in mind, to make them real.

But it was impossible for him to keep this experience in mind without a word of some sort --- without using that word 'presence'.

But how could he talk to other people about 'the presence' and expect them to understand? Was that how the word God had come into being --- to cover all such experiences and make them one shared concept for everybody? Only we had lost the experience: only the empty word remained to us!

And again, that word 'presence', in covering only his own experience, didn't get beyond him, so that really it couldn't convey the magnitude of what he'd just come in contact with: he had to show that it was more than just a passing experience, that it was in a way beyond all experience. He had to convey the idea that while he'd been aware of a whole being --- the 'presence' --- yet it could never be experienced as a whole. Only a part or moment of it could be experienced -- the darkness on the balcony, a glance from the window --- and yet, this part always suggested the whole. And the word 'presence' alone failed to convey this.

He remembered, from Exodus, that before the flight from Egypt Moses had told his people the name of God for the first time. It was no longer 'Lord', meaning simply master, but Jehovah. And Jehovah meant 'I am that I am'.

'I am that I am' gave the idea of an unanswerable will, a complete being, all that there was. It didn't bring in the spectator as 'presence' did.

'But even then', he thought, 'a word isn't enough in itself'. The fact was that he'd still be alone with his experience however many words he used! But 'Jehovah' had been used by men living together, with the same hopes. And they passed it on to their children. In this way it was separate from each one of them in himself. Yet it was still

intimate. So it had exactly that combined awe and intimacy which the thing itself, the 'Presence', needed. And it did this only by being absorbed into the lives of men. Only by being shared among men could it be lifted beyond one man alone. That was the power of a word, as Moses saw. A word, like an idea, had to have a communal sanction before it could seem to have the detachment of the thing it described.

'So,' thought Granville, 'if my word 'presence' was used by people now, and it entered into their lives, and was passed on to children, it would take on power; it would carry a hint in its very sound of the kind of thing I experienced when the word came to my mind.'

And so it was with 'God'. It had to be known and felt from childhood. And if it wasn't, then knowledge of 'God' was accidental. One stumbled on it here and there through life, as he'd just done. To know 'God' you had to see him in the eyes of people round you, and hear him referred to day after day and connected with the smallest actions, drawn into the flesh of life, not an idea, so that He always seemed to be at the edge of things and to be watching you. There was no difficulty in the knowledge itself, as Granville's experience of the 'presence' showed. But our community had no allowance for it. God had slipped out of life.

The word was certainly empty for him. It was the same as the pagan 'god', a man in the sky who cast a net round Venus and Mars while they made love; ridiculous or aesthetic, always untrue. The word 'God' couldn't convey that dumb and alive 'presence' he'd been aware of.

And this 'presence' was all he had. It came and went, a mere lonely experience. It didn't affect anything. It lacked the warmth of

~~something pointed out to him in childhood.~~

Yet The eclipse had been an event in empty space for him, like the click of a machine. He couldn't help it. ~~He would always see it like that.~~ His feelings were separate from the event. There were his feelings, then the weather, then the eclipse, all separate, never in the unity, ~~he was sometimes aware of in life underneath~~ <sup>proper</sup> to be touched so easily, ~~it always seemed.~~ Abu Kath'm had seen God. ~~But for his world that was mystical, meaning strange and hidden, not belonging to the light of day or shared by other people.~~

Now even the word 'presence' was becoming empty for him. It was an idea floating in his mind, because he'd got used to the word now. It was private. It had no echoes beyond him. Yes, you had to see it in other men's eyes. Alone you weren't enough.

The room looked ordinary again, and the silence outside seemed familiar now, an accompaniment to his thoughts, no longer suggesting a 'presence'. He began to feel tired. But he was determined to get to the end of his thoughts. ~~He heard Pinkie cough from next door in her sleep.~~ It occurred to him that there'd be a heavy day at the office ~~some files were coming in from Kirkuk.~~ But a question persisted in his mind: how had a person like himself come about, perceiving the sky without anything divine in it? ~~without God?~~ <sup>which</sup> Because it wasn't the truth -- that sky he saw! It wasn't the real sky, ~~that was mysterious and seemed to breathe.~~

He saw the sky as a kind of mathematical concept, ~~yes, but what did that mean?~~ It meant he saw it as something useful: to men ~~that is,~~ <sup>to be</sup> ~~men could~~ <sup>and</sup> measure <sup>it</sup> and predict its movements. ✓

The eclipse was a kind of geometrical action for him: an Object called the moon moved between an Object called the sun and another Object <sup>the earth,</sup> on which he was standing. A dimming of light resulted, lasting so many seconds. He saw it like a surveyor from another universe.

Yet he hadn't the slightest knowledge of surveying or physics. It was simply in his nature! *It was a man's interpretation which had given him.* *Jital*

Ask any ordinary man and he'd give you the same geometrical story of what was 'happening' in the eclipse. It wasn't that this kind of thinking was new or unusual, but that in us it was more than thinking --- it was actually the way we smelt and touched and saw things!

It was unreligious thinking. But why? Well, it laid down the nature of the sky as something that could be measured and predicted: there was nothing in the sky that couldn't be tackled by men's minds; it was only oxygen, light, matter, only objects in space.

Everything beyond <sup>2</sup>men's minds escaped him. <sup>But</sup> ~~the world was full of it:~~ men's minds were only a slight little tracing on this huge shadow eternity. Yet he'd been brought up to say it was the whole thing!

As a child he'd always imagined there was a policeman in the sky who controlled everything: not a god but a man, in a blue uniform, with a truncheon. And at the same time this created a terrible puzzlement because the policeman wasn't all that reliable. He had allowed a war to happen, for instance, which nobody could see the reason for afterwards.

What else was that but perceiving the world as if it had been made only for men's ambitions? All of a sudden he saw a connecting link --- his kind of mind came from a terrific act of pride, from wanting to turn the whole of reality into something you could manoeuvre and use, just as if you were the author of it all!

~~It reminded him of that railway bridge, in Sussex, when he'd~~  
 gazed down at the gleaming tracks below <sup>He</sup> and realised that all the facts  
 he'd learned at school were dead facts, because they illuminated a thing  
 only in so far as it could be used for some purpose; it was useful to know  
 about expanding metals <sup>surely</sup> if you were laying those tracks. But it wasn't the  
 whole truth! You had to strike the world dead first, ~~in your mind,~~ to  
 see its function, like something mathematical, apart from yourself.  
 And instead of just keeping that as one of our methods of thinking ---  
 though a strange and disquieting one --- we had let it cloud over our  
 whole consciousness until there were people like --- himself! --- people  
 who saw the world naturally like that! He saw it with all the heart and  
 breath and enormous mystical movement knocked out of it! ~~Yes, all that~~  
 invisible movement, all that 'presence' round him, had to be called  
 'mystical' --- a little cranky!

And to realise this he'd had to allow his whole self and will to  
 be engulfed by something huge and apparently selfless outside him, first  
 in Sussex, when he'd really seen the country for the first time, and now  
 in Basrah. 'Islam' meant 'surrender': he'd surrendered to something  
 both times, he'd been sucked in by the outer presence --- he remembered  
 that walk along the road to Chichester when he could hardly tell the  
 difference between his body and what lay all round him in the massive heat.  
 And wasn't that what Moses had told the tribes in the desert --- to submit?  
 Wasn't that the first law of all real religion --- submit and surrender  
 not to other men but to the 'presence': listen to it, at night ---?

And this meant forgetting your ambitions. 'You' were forgotten ---  
 only this huge will outside remained, flooding through you!

Christ had to say it again --- he came fifteen hundred years

after Moses. Again there were ambitions in the air --- the God of the Jews was waiting to conquer all the world for Israel. And Christ began the conquering in his own way, through a total submission of self that nobody else understood. He seemed to waver in the garden, the night before he was taken: no one understood what he was about to do, he was absolutely alone --- on the face of it, he would just die and not be heard of again; 'O, my Father', he said, 'if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'

As the big will outside willed!

While people had ambitions in their minds they were cut off from the truth --- that was what Moses and Christ seemed to say! The little personal will stopped the big outer will from flowing through them. So both Moses and Christ had to lift God up above men again --- away from their ambitions --- from their itch for rewards!

'Is our role now,' Granville thought, 'the same, to life the sky up beyond men again?'

That was the meaning of Christ's death: people were shown that at least one man could give up all his ambitions and go willingly into death.

That was why the story held, because it was a standing testimonial from generation to generation of the power of the human creature.

Christ left no rules for us. Only this silence after his death! But was that also a sign --- that we had to look further and further into the silence until we found our feet? Was this what history had been doing? 'Is this my interest in history?' Granville asked himself. 'To find the traces of that theme?'

The moment the God of Moses was mixed up in ambitions --- the

moment temples were put up to Him and a high priest elected, the moment a society started round it --- there was danger. The moment Christ was caught up in a church, in ambition and office and competition, there was danger. Their truth was smashed. Little personal wills got in the way. We had churches. But not a religious soul in the Christian world! Nobody could be religious! Nobody had it in him! He hadn't got it in his nerves, in his mind, in his heart, in his nose or bowels or belly! All you could do was make a little gesture --- strive --- try to fight your way through! But the churches were just muck. They were little reminders of what men used to be. Like the ruins of temples! But more than that they were only little clubs. The Christian couldn't believe in God. Christ and God had been smashed to pieces. We could only grub in the ruins and pick up little morsels of the marvellous coloured stone and try to piece the world together again so that real dawns would rise on our children's children's children ... 'If a man tells you he believes in God,' thought Granville, 'he's a liar or a fool or a swine!' The Christian was crippled and broken and babbling like an idiot, and God had almost totally disowned him, the link was only there by the thinnest umbilical cord. Could one of the idiots suddenly stop grubbing in the dust and garbage and lift his eyes up to the sky --- eyes that shone with self --- that saw nothing but self even in the sky --- and say 'I believe in God?'

Perhaps only the middle ages had been really in the image of Christ. Then, ambitions had been really dead for a time. The old idiot-show of the ancient Roman world, with its endless armies and its putrid works of art and its sewers and straight roads, was finished for

a time. And so they were 'middle' ages for us --- after the Roman empire, which we understood, and before the renaissance in Italy, which we also understood: between two spectacular worlds, the Roman and our own!

Were they called 'middle' because they were all uncertainty from our point of view? Was it that we couldn't read our own ambitions in them? Nothing had happened in that time from our point of view! Just as, for our world now, Abu Kath'm hadn't seen the real eclipse!

We looked in the middle ages for our own plans and charters and personalities and continual fretting struggles between little personal wills from epoch to epoch, and didn't find them. No trade, as in our world, or very little of it! No great landowners with their armies of slaves, no ambitious ruling class! But one great ambitious project there had been, that held everything else together: the second coming of Christ.

Well, you could see the germ of trouble there, already. People would wait so long and no longer. Gradually the old ambitious itch had started again. The first sign was a revival of trade. Gradually the towns became important again. Certain people had grown tired of waiting! The 'burghers' --- the men of the towns --- were the seed of the new world that came into being. They planned life, they always had done: they planned the education, the law, the drainage. Their trade brought movement. They looked ahead. They brought refinement. That peculiar under-stillness of the middle ages, that patient waiting mood, came to an end.

There were long connecting roads again, new ship routes. Venice was typical of the new world, an independent republic based on trade, not faith! It sent its ships to infidel ports without a bad conscience.

Then ancient learning was revived. No sign like the cross had governed the ancient world! There'd been heroism --- fabulous stories, not the bitter stories of the saints, always waiting for second life! Men had seemed to stand their full height in the pagan world --- tragic figures! Men had even populated the sky, as gods! Happiness had been a reasonable design, even if the gods farted at you sometimes!

So this renaissance was a revival of life as a grand, enjoyable adventure! There were great voyages of discovery. The nobles were again cultivated people living in the towns --- not just soldiers as they'd been in the middle ages. Fortunes were made, courts sprang up everywhere, there were tyrants, strange whirling careers that went out like a star.

But it wasn't just a repetition of the ancient world. In a way this new world came from Christ. That was the contradiction! The will and stature he'd given men by saying they were the children of God, and therefore free, was precisely the energy behind the renaissance. It looked like a repetition because of its spectacular movement, but there was now a different morality from which people acted, there was a new dignity, there was the sense of one order governing everything. The old chaos of the ancient Roman world wasn't there --- no haphazard myths and cults and weird 'mysteries'. Theories of an ordered universe started, a universe governed by laws, and all of life was now searched for its consistent principles and themes, even the human body.

And the same thing went on in the church. But the end of the middle ages the church was as much a vehicle for personal ambition as the ancient Roman governments had been. The first real challenge to this was the reformation in Germany. Again this was from Christ. Again,

like the renaissance, it aimed to lift men up.

It denied that the pope had any mysterious access to God. Confession ought to be abolished, it said. This meant that the church wouldn't be able to absolve a man of his sins --- even for money, as it had been doing. Only the man himself could do it, in his own conscience. This took away the church's hold on people --- the hold of fear and interest. It took away the intimate hold, the consoling guidance in little things.

Both the renaissance and the reformation, without meaning to, achieved a kind of secular society in which Christ and God were separated from life. These words fell away from the lips of the poor, gradually. Men had been lifted up so high --- the renaissance made him shine with intelligence and seem to conquer all of reality, the reformation made him a priest to himself --- that nothing else beyond them could be seen!

So the two movements had the same effect. A society came into being that went round like clockwork, serving nothing but itself, not referring to anything beyond it. The sky became like an empty ceiling over it --- just space --- oblivion.

But people's behaviour wasn't the same as in ancient times. There was nothing like the greed and chaos of the old empire, in its last years. Christ seemed to have entered life, but anonymously, in people's behaviour. There was a new kind of social order. There were fewer and fewer slaves, fewer serfs. Women were no longer servants. That breath of freedom from Christ had come into life. There was the idea of the dutiful citizen, more and more, especially in the north, where the reformation had happened. Every man was more and more responsible for himself. But Christ was less and less recognised as the author. Society

was 'Christian', but the name Christ began to fall away.

Men chose their own lives. 'Democracy' --- demos-kratia, the power of men, above everything else.

<sup>universe</sup>  
 'And so I see ~~the eclipse~~ as described by men,' he said to himself, 'in a ~~universe~~ <sup>that</sup> spanned by ~~men's~~ measurements and calculations. I see it only inside men's capacities. And everything beyond a man's mind escapes me! I have no words for it. Only when I look into Abu Kath'm's eyes do I see it; and realise ~~how little open to the real world I am!~~'

→ 'If I withdraw from something and watch it,' he asked himself, 'what is the activity uppermost in me? Surely the brain? And so, naturally, if I'm in withdrawal from things --- from people --- even from myself --- my uppermost activity is in the brain: I see things from the brain, the sky <sup>is</sup> like an empty <sup>mathematical</sup> proposition <sup>for me</sup>.'

~~'This is perhaps what I noticed first in Abu Kath'm, that she isn't in withdrawal.'~~

He remembered how once he'd said to her jokingly one morning, "You're getting fat!", and she'd looked down at herself, at her flowing robes, with such a funny expression, so mixed and puzzled: she really never had thought about herself before; in that way, it seemed; she hadn't thought about her body. The division of 'mind' from 'body' didn't exist for her. That was his distinction! That was the Christian world!

Really his remark tore her out of God's world, where she was never quite distinct from everything round her, and it suddenly pitched her into a men's world, where she was a 'person', where she stood alone, surveying her own body from above.

She never could attain to a 'personality' in our sense. She

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His education had given him no  
understanding of all this. It had put a design  
of names on the world: men's names for  
things. The universe was ..... (as on  
p. 218. - p. 220 (dead universe he'd been  
taught to believe in).

Then in p 223 - he realised that  
the spell had been taken out of life.  
In biology the rabbit was studied,  
but the rabbit dead, in history etc.

Then (as in p 224) the me  
sentence: [He began to see that the  
world he knew through himself alone  
wasn't necessarily false, his private  
like a dream. That was the fault to look  
found - the rift of the  
eclipse.

END with that sentence.

never could survey the world and herself as if she had really arranged it all, planning it as she went along! She had submitted, she was submitted, in all her being, she could be nothing else. She was blind. She had no plans for the day, for the next hour --- the will of Allah created her rhythm.

She felt it was unlucky if someone asked after the health of her children. She made a quick little prayer to ward off the evil eye. All the common people of Basrah did that. All the ancient Mediterranean peoples, the Greeks included, had done it, too. One mustn't pry too closely into life. There was a spell that mustn't be broken. Too much attention shouldn't be drawn to men. Indeed, the mind altogether was unlucky.

The dawn began to come through, an ever so faint blueness at the corner of the sky, making the rush carpet and the door to the balcony softly clear. And almost to the moment there was the sound of birds. Their singing seemed to be inside the air, waking with it, in no particular place. How restful the twittering was, with all the time of the universe at its disposal. <sup>to</sup> The birds actually seemed to wake with the sky. And men were non-existent. <sup>to him for the first time. He was free for the first time.</sup> How lovely freedom was! <sup>for a husband.</sup>

Horrors of the mind was in him, too --- from Abbott's Road. That was why Abu Kath'm had stirred so much thought in him. It was really a horror of men --- a horror of them dominating everything, shutting out the light.

His thoughts came drowsily, hardly connected any more: dim but with a peaceful clarity underneath, hardly words any more, disjointed and brief.

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End of Book II

In Abbott's Road, too, life had been blind, like Abu Kath'm. 'They' --- the absent power --- had controlled everything. 'They' came and collected the rent. 'They' made wars. 'They' made you work. Movement always came from outside. Outside was the will of men --- invisible men who arranged the schedule: not the will of Allah.

Even then the intimate little fabric of life was hardly touched -- the winding of the clock, pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, the walk in the park on Sunday afternoons. It was woven together again at once.

Of course, there wasn't Abu Kath'm's stateliness in Abbott's Road. Nobody walked like her. That had gone out. Life had a troublesome edge. There were shill things: at the end of life was oblivion, like the grey sky on a bad morning, eternally. Nobody explained it. Suddenly there might be a cream-coloured ambulance in the street. Or blinds might be pulled down. There was a sense of disaster. Death was unexplained. Just a frightful oddity.

And there was no slow awakening to the world like the birds. A hard routine had been fixed on every day. One couldn't way where it came from, and one didn't do it for oneself. It was just there, a jerking motion you had to join because there was nothing else. Life wasn't natural there. The face grew fixed, too, with set lips and unmoving eyes. The words became clipped. One's walk was jerky, too.

But even then, despite the plan that was fixed by somebody else, the little fabric was kept. People held stiffly away from each other. Their lives were arranged by men they didn't see. But still the fabric was untouched.

And Christ and God had gone into this fabric, it seemed. The church was just a building in Abbott's Road, but there was a decency

between people, and a quiet belief. The Christian dignity was there. But the word 'Christ' itself was only a swear-word.

He remembered one Monday afternoon in his early childhood, when he was sitting on his mother's knee, after she'd hung the clothes out on the line. He remembered gazing down at the narrow gardens where sheets were billowing in the sunshine, and having the impression that this was a glimpse of the very centre of life, ~~which was~~ a place of <sup>perfect</sup> peace. It was difficult to explain. But it seemed to come from his mother, to be passed on to him like speech. It was the sense of there being one marvellous theme that ran through all life and included the sunshine, the silence, the wind making the sheets billow, and the two of them sitting there and gazing far beyond each other, while joined together.

Beyond the roof-tops in Abbott's Road there was oblivion. No questions were asked. There was only a plan of work made by men. That had to be fulfilled. There was no other meaning.

So you couldn't lift up your head to the sky, or to Christ or God. You no longer had the right. There was only the plan of work. But even then a glow was kept.

The plans always came from above. Of course --- those movements of history he'd just been thinking about, the revival of commerce, the renaissance, the reformation, the industrial revolution, they were all from above! That was why there were only books to go by --- nothing was passed from mouth to mouth about them.

Sometimes people had worked in fields, sometimes in cities, sometimes for one man, sometimes for several, sometimes for the state --- or in the name of God, or in the name of humanity! But it was only a wind that passed. Life remained substantially the same, with the same

peace.

Otherwise who would have done the work? You can't work running round all the time.

His father loved the dawn. Every morning he went round the tiny garden, just after the light came. Even the houses of Abbott's Road looked natural at dawn, like hills.

And at King George's dock his father could keep his dream. They couldn't take away the vast river gleaming in the early light, and the sound of fog-horns!

Unless a man had a light in his eyes --- of something beyond all men --- he was horrible!

'How horrible to grow up among burghers!' he thought. What suffering that must be for the children! He remembered something lovely from before the War: it was when he'd seen the old Queen pass in her carriage and a woman next to him had said to her child, lifting him up, over the heads of the crows, "There she is, duck! Look, there's the Queen!" And the boy had gazed before him, his mouth open, absolutely rapt, gazing it seemed into everything fabulous that there was in the world! It was lovely how a dream could be passed on like that!

He felt satisfied now. His life had joined together. That was why he'd set out on these thoughts, perhaps --- to join his life together. He could face men better now, he thought. ~~He had his own world.~~

A clock struck in the distance, for he couldn't make out the number of strokes. He felt sleepy for the first time, and began to nod.

~~Would a godly earth come back again? he wondered drowsily. As he thought~~  
 this he opened his eyes again and looked across at the window, and saw a long curling leaf of the palm-tree silhouetted against the sky like a finger, pointing upwards.

End of Book II

BOOK VCHAPTER 22.

He went up to Meedham at the end of the week, and Elizabeth met him at the station. He'd left the house neat and quiet, --- he and Hanni got down to some cleaning, as a surprise for Pinkie, and everything sparkled. It was really a lovely house, if only they could keep it clean!

This was his first journey since he'd got back, and he sat gazing out of the window all the time, contented and drowsy, watching the steam sweep down in front of the window and hide the countryside for a moment. He'd given himself a treat with a first-class ticket, and he could stretch out his legs. The floor was carpeted. Delicious! There were the familiar snug stations with their glass roofs, and bookstalls with lights glowing inside them amid piles of magazines and newspapers, and gloomy halls marked 'Buffet' with steaming windows. And beyond the platform, trees. Why hadn't he come into the country before? It was such a relief to see the long grass and streams, the wooden stiles!

It was a misty, hot day, with the sun trying to get through, and the fields looked sullen. But it brightened the further north they went. And by the time they arrived, in the evening, the sun cast a red glow over the fields.

Elizabeth was like a rush of wind, as always. He'd begun to feel nervous, preparing for her volley of talk. She was sitting in the car --- a broken-down Ford with a canvas top --- and shouted out,

"Philip --- come on, you old dear!" She looked tremendously well.

They kissed.

"How are you?"

"I'm fine --- jump in, dinner'll be up in a few minutes!"

And almost before he'd thrown his bag in the back she'd engaged the gear and they were off. She had a wonderful cascading generosity. It was in her body. There wasn't a spare or flinching movement. She had full, strong, black eyes and dark hair that kept tumbling about as she talked, and a way of leaning forward all the time as if searching for something. She was full of questions and laughter, and rushed in all the time. But it was never social talk. It was like a great waterfall --- one was drenched with spray and it made the silence afterwards more glorious. She'd become plumper in the last two years but her face was still clear like a school-girl's.

"It's ages since I saw you!"

"Yes!"

He felt quite jaded and slow next to her, but increasingly excited: "How are the children?" he asked.

"They're marvellous! Jane's sweet. She gets soft on every little boy she meets --- isn't it a scream?"

He began, "I've never seen them, you know! Only ---"

But the words were swept out of his mouth.

"No?" she cried. "I could have sworn they knew you!"

"Oh, no!"

She turned and looked at him with her full, dark eyes: "But you've been up here before, haven't you?"

"No!"

"What? Oh, you poor darling --- I was sure ---!" She stopped, biting her lip and frowning while the car sped on, making perilous bumps near the grass verge. "Didn't you come up with Pinkie just before you went abroad?"

"No, just Pinkie."

"Really? Oh, well, we'll have to make up for it this time!" And she pressed forward over the steering wheel and increased speed, making the car lurch and rattle suddenly, then career off like a horse under the whip.

"She's been telling me all about you!" she cried, just like a rider shouting something in mid-gallop. "You have got a swell job!"

And she flashed him a bright glance of admiration, which he hadn't seen in her eyes before. She'd always given him a blinking, hesitant glance under her eyebrows before, as if she didn't know what to expect from him. But now, apparently, he'd proved himself!

The country looked very still in the evening light. They passed by a farmhouse lying behind elm trees, and great barns with red, mossy roofs, and paddocks with fences. Sometimes the red sky flashed in a window.

"Red sky at night ..." he murmured.

"Yes! It looks marvellous for the beach tomorrow!"

"Oh, I forgot, you're near the sea!"

"Yes, isn't it good? We went down this morning with the kids!"

"It's lovely country," he said, gazing out of the window.

"It's my ideal. It's got space, and lots of shade, and trees, and that sort of thing!"

They began an ascent between hedgerows, and the car seemed to

hesitate.

"Come on, you old crock!" she shouted.

But it went its own pace while she kept pushing herself forward in her seat to help it along.

"She doesn't like the hill!" she added. "Sometimes she does and sometimes she doesn't" It was a question whether they would get to the top at all. It went slower and slower. The chassis rattled and trembled, but then the car just cleared the rim of the hill before it gave out. "Done it!" The engine had stalled, but after a few tries with the starter, breaking through the country silence, she got it going again. "The mixture's too rich! I give her too much peddle or revving or something, so Gordy says! There, now come on and finish your stretch, you lazy old bounder! Isn't she marvellous? We wouldn't part with her for worlds! Gordy always runs about in the shiny thing, but I hate it! Yes, isn't the country lovely round here?"

And she looked out, blinking, with the most lovely air of discovery. There were hills stretching on either side as far as they could see; she suddenly pointed out to the right, where there was a cluster of thick trees in the distance, a dark green mass touched with red from the glowing sky.

"We live over there!" she cried.

He could make out the tower of a church with a tiny wooden steeple built on to it, and the faded red brick of some houses.

"I say," she added with a laugh, "I hope you're not going to be bored! I'm afraid my conversation's not up to much! What a pity old Gordy's not here, he's the brainy type, don't you think so?, It's going to be a bit of a hen party, Philip!"

He said something about finding her intelligent company and they both laughed. Then he asked, "How is Gordon?"

They'd met once or twice, in a distant kind of way, through Pinkie.

"Oh, working too hard as usual!" She shook her head with a vivacious movement, so that her hair swept across her shoulders. "I can't relax when he's here! Is Pinkie like that?"

"Probably."

"You men are so frightfully domineering! She looks sweet."

"Who?"

"Pinkie. I think you're doing her good."

He thought, 'It's Grove you're congratulating, old girl, did you but know it!'

The country swept past again. They were now in a perilous descent. Strange, he'd felt impudent asking after Gordon, using his Christian name!

He remembered Gordon Bewley-Patton as a tall man with the same bounding health as Elizabeth but a quieter voice, and a great civility and shyness of manner. Sometimes he winced if Elizabeth bounded about too much, Pinkie said, and called her 'Mrs. Bellows-Patton.'

He'd met Gordon at his club, while the women were off somewhere shopping. He had turned the same gingerly glance on Granville, combined with warm attention, as Elizabeth usually did. But when Granville showed, with a deliberate effort, that he was at ease, Gordon settled down as well. There had been a little crisis over the drink. Granville had wanted beer and asked for 'bitter; please'. Gordon didn't understand this. He'd apparently thought it was some mumbo-jumbo because he screwed up his eyes

and leaned forward, his hand to his ear, with the same gengerly expression as before, and said, "Bi---? Bi---? Bi---? What was that?" "Bitter." "Bi---? Bi---? I'm sorry I can't understand you!" Granville had laughed, "Bitter, bitter!" And at last the bar-man had rescued them with, "He means bitter beer, sir. Light beer!" And understanding dawned on Gordon's face. "Oh, beer!" he had cried, and then given Granville a bright, tender smile as if to say, 'So glad we don't talk different languages, after all!'

"I don't think she really enjoys it out there," he said as the car turned into a narrow lane.

"Oh, why ever not?" She flung him a quick, absorbed glance.

"Well, I don't know, the life's too small for her --- it's no good for a woman ---"

"But she said she adored it! I thought it was just the thing as long as you didn't stay out there too long and get used to the sun-downer and come back with a bad liver and all that!"

"Of course, it's exciting for her ---"

"Darling old Hester's such a bohemian, isn't she?" she asked with a laugh. She made it sound so harmless --- even good! "Isn't that the trouble?" she went on. "She's a bohemian!"

"Yes, I suppose so. But that's the point, she can't fling her legs out in Basrah as she can here. People don't understand it. Well, you know yourself: it's enough for a woman to show her face out there."

"Oh, quite!" Then she added more quietly, "You've got to be firm with Hester. You mustn't let her wander off."

"Why not?" he asked. And the question surprised him, as it did her.

"I always say that," he murmured. "By accident."

She didn't turn her eyes towards him but went on. "And the fourth is 'I'M awfully glad to have met you' or 'Nice to have seen you' --- you must never say that!"

"Really?" Pinkie said. "What are you to say, then --- supposing you feel it?"

"You mustn't feel it, I suppose!"

"But you really believe they're give-aways?" he asked her.

"Yes, dear, they work, they really do!"

"But what do they give away?"

"Well, a person's position ---"

"But what exactly?"

She paused, thinking again, in deference to him. It made an unnatural line come on her forehead. "Well, it proves a person's middle class."

"Oh!" He laughed. "You only go down as far as that!"

Pinkie laughed also, and Elizabeth followed them with an innocent expression.

"Anything under the middle class," murmured Pinkie, "is sea-monsters for Liz. One doesn't even mention it!"

"Well, they do give themselves airs sometimes," Elizabeth persisted with a doubtful expression

"Don't you sometimes?" he asked.

She fluttered, not answering.

"Liz is an hon., old cock, so she has<sup>s</sup> the right!" Pinkie said.

"Well, if she's an hon. she ought to try and behave like one, that's all I can say --- !" Granville started indignantly, flushing, not looking

Toby, was solemn and plump. He liked to go into detail and asked one question after another while his younger brother, with lovely fair eyes, sat listening intently, his mouth open; and Jane looked out of the window, occasionally addressing a quiet, feminine question to Pinkie, which the boys pounced on if they could.

"Do you like driving the car?" Toby asked him.

"Yes, now and then."

"Why now and then?"

"Well, I like to look out of the window sometimes and you can't do it if you're driving."

"Daddy can."

"Can he?"

"Yes, He turns round and talks to us while he's driving."

"That's rather dangerous, isn't it?" Pinkie said.

He took no notice. "He rides a motor bike, too. He's given it up now."

"Why?"

"He says it isn't suitable when you have a family."

Pinkie turned round to him. "Why isn't it?"

"Well," Toby said, giving her a stern look, "you can hardly take the family on a motor bike, can you?"

"No, I suppose you can't."

There was a pause and Jane asked quietly, "Hester, do you always wear your hair short like that?"

"Yes, why?"

"Mummy always has hers long. You ought to see it when she undresses and it unravels. I'd rather like to have plaits but they

don't let you at school."

"Oh, do be quiet," Toby said without looking at her. "You're always on about hair."

She leaned across and pinched him on the knee, which was bare: "Ouch!" He pulled her hair and she screamed.

"Hey, children!" Pinkie cried. "You'll fall out if you aren't careful!"

There was quiet again.

"That's impossible," David said after consideration. "You can't fall out if you're sitting in the back because your seats are in the way and there's only one door."

"How observant of you!"

"Jane hit her head on the top once when daddy bounced," Toby said "and she blubbered all the way back."

"Oh, blubber yourself," she replied; but she was ashamed and didn't say any more.

They guided him to a beautiful spot among tall, white rocks where there wasn't a soul; it was a tiny inlet with pools of clear water, some of them quite deep, with a pebbly bottom; they got the car almost to the edge of the sea and began taking off their clothes; Pinkie took charge of the children at once, putting their clothes in three piles on one of the smooth rocks shining in the sun; and as soon as they were ready, dressed in uniform black bathing suits, the three of them dashed off into one of the deeper pools and began splashing about. Beyond the rocks, about fifty yards out, because it was low tide, there was the sea, green and still, flickering in the sun; there wasn't a sound apart from the cries of the children, not even a bird, and nothing was visible on the sea as

far as the horizon. Pinkie pulled a white swimming cap over her head and waded with him into one of the pools; Jane was swimming apart from the boys, waiting for her to come in, brooding a little; Pinkie lowered herself into the water as she always did, with a gingerly action, flicking water over her shoulders, wincing and screwing up her face; but the water was luke-warm. He walked on towards the sea and Toby suddenly rushed after him, putting his wet hand in his.

"David and Jane aren't allowed to go in the sea without daddy," Toby said.

"Well," Granville replied, "let's leave them with Hester, shall we?"

"Yes."

The sea was much colder and they both plunged in at the same time, coming close to each other with a gasp. Toby called out breathlessly, "Jolly good, isn't it?" and they both put their heads under. Only the rocks and the open sea could be seen, but nothing of the coastline, so that it felt wonderfully deserted, like an island. He splashed Toby and ducked away; they chased each other, whooping and laughing; the boy had freckles on his nose which showed up more when he was wet, and his teeth had a gap in them; his head would shoot up in the water right by Granville's face; they lay full length, floating, only their heads and toes showing; they stretched and twisted in the clear water. David, on land, had begun to resent Toby's absence.

"Toby, come back! Daddy doesn't allow it!"

"Oh, you fibber," Toby shouted back without moving a muscle from his floating position, "you know jolly well he does! He doesn't allow you, you mean!"

They swam in again, panting, and Toby plunged into one of the shallow pools in an indifferent way, showing off to his brother; David came and splashed him and at once great fountains of spray went up, hiding them both. Jane dog-paddled away from them, close to Pinkie, who also had a quiet dog-paddle. "Aren't they awful?" he heard Jane say in a confidential tone.

Afterwards Pinkie saw to the childrens' hair, combing each of them in turn; he watched her from the car; they took her help quite for granted, remaining perfectly quiet while she was doing it; she had the competent look in her face that he'd noticed before. In the car, when they all got in, Jane wanted to stay close to her, so she was allowed in front; the smell of hair was greater now and also there was a cherry-like smell, fresh and clean, from their skins; they all began singing, 'Hickery-dickery dock, the mouse ran up the clock!' as the car bounced towards the road.

"That was a good swin, wasn't it?" Toby asked intimately, breathing down the back of his neck.

"Rather!"

There was a pause and Jane murmured, "Toby always has been a boaster."

But to their surprise Toby said nothing; perhaps his knee still hurt. But after a time he asked his sister, "How's your precious hair? I suppose you're going to tell us how you'd like to have plaits?"

"No, I'm not!" Jane paused, gazing out of the window steadily. "My remark wasn't addressed to you in any case."

"Oh, listen to that!" he cried. "Where did you get that from?"

"What?"

"That way of talking?" Toby turned to Pinkie: "She got that sentence from daddy. He often says, 'My remark wasn't addressed to you.' But he's funny when he says it!"

"And she," David said quietly, "just sounds pompous."

"Oh, shut up, you!" Jane cried, turning on the smaller brother. "There's no need for you to butt in! You're the most pompous little thing I've ever seen if it comes to that!"

David was silent, and a hush fell over the three of them; he seemed about to cry.

Jane turned her neck slowly to look at him and said in a gingerly way, "You aren't going to blubber, are you?"

"Oh, be quiet, you!" David said as the tears gushed out of his eyes and he continued gazing before him.

"Oh, dear!" Toby said in a glum, adult way, his lips pouting, turning to look out of the window, away from his younger brother.

"David!" Pinkie cried. "Come on, old boy, don't cry! She didn't mean it." And she leaned back and put a handkerchief to his eyes.

Through David's tears --- though he remained quite still --- came the words, "She meant every word of it. She always does!"

"Well, what about it?" Toby asked in a solid way, still looking out of the window. "She doesn't affect me. She can say what she likes. Girls are sappy, don't you know that?"

"But I'm younger," David said, reasoning, his eyes clear of tears.

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Quite a lot!"

"I never cried at your age."

"That's a lie!" Jane said.

David turned to her, his eyes almost dry: "Why, can you remember him crying?"

"Of course, I can! All children cry!"

"All right," Toby said in a neat voice. "Chapter and verse, please."

There was a pause. "What on earth are you talking about?" Jane asked, actually looking across at him for a moment with her eyes screwed up.

But Toby didn't turn round, only remained solidly gazing out of the window with his hands on his chubby knees.

"It's from daddy again," David said quietly.

"Oh, dear; you are a copy-cat!" Jane cried, still looking across at Toby.

"I can use expressions like everybody else," Toby said in his usual unassailable tone. "Daddy speaks English, doesn't he? You can say I'm a copy-cat because I speak English if you like. That's the sort of thing you would say!"

"But nobody knows what it means!"

"What what means?"

"That about 'chapters'!"

"Of course they do!" David cried, his eyes light, leaping up and down in his seat. "You are a dunce! It means 'example'! Give me an example, it means!"

"There you are," Toby said. "That's what I mean about it not mattering if you're young. David knows far more than you already!"

And Jane was quenched for a time, biting her lip.

Pinkie turned to her. "Don't you cry as well."

"Oh, no," Jane replied, smiling at her brightly, "there's no

danger of that. They're so silly, both of them!"

"I had exactly the same when I was your age," Pinkie said to her, her eyes flickering a little.

"Did you?" Jane asked with interest.

"Yes. Only I had eight brothers and sisters."

"Eight?"

"Yes!"

"Golly!"

The two boys were silent, absorbed in a game of gripping each other by the hand and trying to push the other back; at the moment there was stalemate.

"Eight brothers and sisters!" Jane repeated, marvelling. "I'd like some sisters. Did you like it?"

"What, having sisters?"

"Yes."

"I hated it."

"You hated your sisters?" Jane cried with a touch of admiration in her voice.

"Well, I didn't hate them so much, I hated being younger, being left out of things." She made it sound like yesterday; the hurt was still in her voice.

"Did they leave you alone all the time, then?"

"Yes. So when your brothers are beastly, remember it could be worse!" And Pinkie smiled at her.

Toby won suddenly. David's arm was wrenched back and he called out, "Pax!"

"And that was my left arm," Toby said with satisfaction. "So I'm

turned into a low-lying house with mullioned windows about two centuries before; nearly all the fields round them, stretching as far as you could see, with an elm here and there, belonged to the house; it was mostly grazing land; what little was farmed didn't pay for itself, Elizabeth told them.

"They're as poor as church mice," she added. "There's just Tommy and his old mum now --- she's completely batty! He's an angel!"

It was windy and uncomfortable by the courts, because it was so high up, at the edge of a kind of cliff, unprotected from the wind that came straight in from the sea. A number of people were sitting on the grass by the courts, most of them women, and as soon as Elizabeth appeared there were loud cries --- "Darling!" "What a sweet dress!", "Did you get those cuttings I sent you?", "Elizabeth!", "Liz, old girl!", "How's Gordy?", "Who's winning against who?" "Never play it myself!" "Liar, Charles!", "Wasn't that a gorgeous evening?" She was lost among them.

"I say, look out ---!" A ball flew over the net and bounced among them. "Sorry!" came a cry from the court; a young man in tweeds dashed across and retrieved it. There were roars of laughter among the women who'd been nearly hit.

"How's that?" someone cried.

"Out for a duck!"

"Boundary!"

One of the women had a new-born child in her arms and Elizabeth began cooing over it, completely absorbed and gay, chucking it under the chin, "Oh, what a booful, lovely, cheeky-weeky darling! You saucy-waucy, booky-wooky, booful little sweetheart, booful precious!" The young man in tweeds sat by the court on a shooting stick, crying out when there was a

good ball; but the wind kept carrying it off and there were shouts of "Damn!" and "Just my bloody luck!" from the players. The ball went swiftly to and fro, just over the net, making a steady plock on the rackets; beyond the court there was blue sky, and, below, hills patched with dark woods, lighted up by the sun for a moment and then dull again as a cloud raced across. Pinkie got caught in talk by one of the women and he could hear her saying 'yes' in her bored way so that it sounded like 'yerse'; he guessed that the woman was talking about housework or something, and moved closer to make sure; it was babies, whether one should have two or three; Pinkie looked as if she wanted to vomit. Suddenly an older woman who was only half in the conversation barked across at her, "Have you got stables?" and Pinkie replied in a perfectly steady voice, "No --- were you looking for one?"

There was tea in the library and they went in after most of the others, because they'd arrived late and the players had to be fed first. Elizabeth was helping in the kitchen and didn't join them: there were also the score cards to mark up and new balls to be unpacked. She dashed here and there, waving to them or saying, "So sorry, darlings!"

A long table had been laid out for about thirty people, but the only other person there when they sat down was a plump young man with pale, loose features, who sat bent over his plate running his fingers through the crumbs thoughtfully; the only clean place was at his side and Pinkie went there while Granville sat opposite.

There was a huge book-case behind him, nearly the length of the room, with criss-cross wire in front of it, but as far as he could see there were no books; there were piles of magazines everywhere, and he noticed gun cartridges, pipes and pipe-racks, billiard-cues leaning against

the wall and, surprisingly, a tall, black case for a double bass. People passed by in the cluttered entrance-hall outside, which was panelled with the most beautiful stripped oak, hundreds of years old. They talked heartily and banged their sticks on the wooden floor, laughing.

Then the man at Pinkie's side suddenly spoke; or rather he looked up and made a sound like, "Ah!" His eyes gave the ambiguous impression of being both piercing and vague, as if the keenness in them had never been called out properly; he was bald, which made him look older than his age.

He turned to Pinkie, after his "Ah!", and asked her in a soft voice, "Are you interested in jazz?"

She ducked her head forward in a characteristic shy way, fixing her eyes on the table before her with a slight frown, and said, "Quite, yes!"

"Do you know the ... ah ... Thames Wharf Stomp?"

"No," She shook her head. "I can't say I do."

"Ah!" He gazed at her with a drowsy light in his eyes. "It's awfully good." He added, "Do you play anything?"

"I play the piano."

"Oh, jolly good! Join our band. Where are you?"

"I'm staying with Elizabeth Bewley-Patton."

"Excellent!"

"But I live in London." She still had her head ducked attentively.

"Oh, that's a pity," he said. "I learned the sax. I've got a library of nearly four hundred records from Dixieland up!"

"Really?"

"Yes. All in this room."

"Oh, is this your house, then?" she asked, looking up for the first time.

"Yes!" He laughed in a wheezing fashion and as abruptly stopped. "You'll notice the lack of books."

"I didn't, as a matter of fact. Nice place you've got," she said looking round.

He said nothing to this, only gazed at his plate.

"Do you get away much?" she asked; but again he took no notice.

"I give myself three hours practice a day", he said, "come fair weather or foul. I go to town for records and sheet-music, I mean town here, you'll understand, not London!" He turned to her and gave her a charming smile, and suddenly said, "Have some more tea!"

"No, thanks!"

He then gazed across at Granville in a blind way for some time, silent, and called out at the top of his voice, "Have some more tea over there!", though they weren't more than two yards apart; and before Granville could answer he shouted, "What?"

"Yes, I'd love some!"

But he simply turned back to Pinkie: "I'm getting a band up. Five-piece. Rattling good! I'd like some better drums, that's all."

"You need a good strong beat, what?" she asked in her swashbuckling manner.

"Yes!" He wheezed a little without moving. "Sounds rather rude, doesn't it?" He asked suddenly, "Are you married?"

"Yes, That's my husband across the table!"

Again he gave him a long, blind look and said quietly, "Where's your husband?"

"You're looking straight at him."

He smiled brilliantly again, the whole of his face waking up, his eyes piercing and stern, light blue: "Oh, I say, I'm awfully sorry, I thought you were old Sanderson's cousin! I couldn't make out why you were here! He's in Mexico!" He laughed again, his shoulders shaking softly. "Or is it Nigeria?"

"Well, they're both rather hot," Pinkie said.

"That's right!" He laughed even more. "I say, you do come out with some rude things!"

"Don't you like tennis?" she asked, apparently to divert him.

"Never play it. Damned silly game. Hurts your arm. Pointless, don't you think so?" He addressed himself to Granville again. "I say, are you in the City?"

"In a way, I ---"

"Wish to God I was, sometimes! My pals do. It's the thing, really, don't you think so? But old mum'd go crackers, she would really!"

Elizabeth came in like the wind and shouted, "Tommy, you old bounder! On to jazz again, what?"

"Let's say I've been and gone," he answered quietly, giving her a little smile.

She began to play up to him, going behind his chair and tweeking his ears. "Tommy's a darling, an absolute darling, and when he gets on to that sax he's irresistible!"

Her look was demure and girlish --- she seemed completely changed by the young man. She looked complimented when he said anything to her. And Pinkie began to be the same, infected. She flashed him interested glances, rather like an actress.

They all got up to return to the courts and he heard Elizabeth invite him to dinner that evening --- a last-minute thing --- "I'm suddenly going to have a party!" she cried. And she went round some of the other guests, inviting them, until she had a party of about seven or eight.

When they were getting into the car to leave the young man came out to them and suddenly thrust his hand into Granville's as if they'd never met and said, "I'm Tommy Bligh! How do you do?" The women laughed and then they drove off.

"Isn't he a scream!" Elizabeth said. She turned to Granville. "Did you like the house, old thing?"

"Yes, lovely!" He gave it a last look as they turned out of the drive; it looked vast at the top of the hill, a bright orange mass, like something done angrily a long time ago.

The fuss and excitement had left Elizabeth. The wind dropped and the evening now looked quiet and clear.

"Quick! Spuds to peel!" Elizabeth cried as they stopped on the gravel path, and ran to the house.

A black silk dress was found for Pinkie, with bare shoulders. When she put on silver ear-rings with it she looked delicate and glittering. The men weren't dressing, Elizabeth said. He took a bath, feeling a twinge of excitement that reminded him of London. The bathroom was wonderful with panelled walls and huge taps bigger than his foot, and a creaking floor. He could hear Elizabeth going to and fro between the kitchen and the dining room, calling out to the children to get a hurry on. They were just going to bed; splashing about in the bathroom downstairs and arguing at the top of their voices; Toby had lost his tooth-

CHAPTER 23.

The next morning he woke up early, even before the children. The sunlight was blazing into the room, already hot, and there was a furry stillness in the air. He went to the window and looked down at the orchard immediately below. The leaves were dusty and pale, with a wilted look in the blinding light. And the earth between the trees was dense-black. Not a leaf stirred, and the chorus of birds, in the gable above his head and also down in the trees, hidden in the black shadows, was absorbed into the stillness as he'd noticed two evenings before, like sounds that came out of the earth. Beyond the garden there was a vast haze across the valley, stretching as far as he could see and hiding the low hills in the distance, hot and motionless. Massive breaths of heat drifted through the window, reminding him of Basrah. Pinkie was still asleep, only her hair visible above the sheets, and he decided to have a look at the village before breakfast.

He left the house quietly, tiptoeing down the stairs. The hall below was dark and cool, with the curtains still drawn. There wasn't a sound. He carefully opened the front door and stepped out on to the gravel path. A hot breath came into his face, scented and heavy --- so like Basrah! And everything had the same fixed look, the leaves of the trees like iron. His step made a sharp sound on the gravel as he turned to look at the house, its windows gleaming in the light, its red brick like a marvellous coral reef in the sea, against the utter blue sky.

The real village lay off the road, through a path in the woods almost opposite the house, and this he found easily.

Everything was hushed there, with a tall arch of twigs overhead letting the sun through in tiny dazzling spots. The trees were young, planted regularly. The floor was damp, with autumn leaves from the previous year sunk into a muddy, soft carpet. And in the middle of the woods a dry turf began, of a dazzlingly fresh green, and he could hear his feet thump on it as he walked; it seemed to echo far underneath. There was a clearing at the end, where the hill dipped suddenly, and here he saw the ruins of a stone house, just the base of the walls with weeds grown all over them, and a broken doorway, the timber eaten through.

Then he came out over a clear valley, and immediately before him lay a squat Norman church, quite alone in its little green plot. The tombstones gleaming white in the sun, some of them at an angle and others sunk into the earth, only their heads visible, mossy and worn. A hot breath of wind went over the grass, stirring the wispy heads. He went to the wooden porch and to his surprise found the church open. And he walked into the cool, musty air, letting the door thump closed behind him. It was quite dark because of the stained-glass windows. And the golden altar gleamed in the trace of sunlight, before bright grey stone. The stone looked like thin canvas, ancient, as if delicate to the touch. The silence was quite unlike that of the fields. There were massive pillars with the brickwork showing through in places. Some of the pews were three or four hundred years old, and had the same frail, dusty-grey look as the stone, with initials carved on them, and signs of the cross.

He heard a bird whistle quite close to the porch, a brief, reminiscent sound piercing the silence for a moment. Then all noise was

gone again. At his feet there were tombstones laid flat --- Lady Jane Courtley, dau<sup>r</sup> of Harry Meedham Esquire, then a date, 1594. The head and hands of the copper figure, representing Lady Courtley, were broken off --- Cromwell's work, probably.

He looked up at one of the stained windows. The sky was just visible. The village felt a great distance away --- so did the house, and Pinkie, asleep. There was a vast silence ruffled by the wind, and the sky had a look of terrific openness, as over the sea, and seemed to be intimate with the earth, knowing this church, not seeing the flow of centuries at all.

It made him feel suddenly taken beyond his own life; removed three or four centuries back, to 1594 perhaps, and, gazing at the sky through one of the windows, he felt he was actually removed into someone else's body, too, from that time, and caught a glimpse, like being vouchsafed another life for a moment, of the world then --- so that he saw the horizon outside the window as the horizon of his whole life, while the hush of the fields outside contained the dead with whom he was connected in his flesh, and to whom he would go again, with the golden, still country beyond the horizon strange to him, forbidden and limitless as only the sight of the stars was to us, in our shrunken world! Ah, at that time everything at the base of life must have been good, with a certain sweetness and local strength! At least, life had started out right then. Fibre and resolution hadn't had to be learned slowly, on top of ruins, as now. And again he arrived at the question, but distantly, as if it concerned someone else, as to whether he would be able to do this for his own life --- bring the early ruins to order. He stood in the church for nearly half-an-hour, gazing down the chancel between the pews,

listening to the silence with its strange, beckoning depth. Then he left quickly, returning to the hot air outside with relief.

He went on to the village. Half the street was in shadow --- closed shop-fronts and windows with the curtains still drawn. Only at the inn, with a cobbled yard and stables, was there life stirring. He heard the clang of a pail, and someone coughed. But the street was deserted, with the sun streaming down its length, blacking out one side.

At the bottom of the hill the road became barer and widened. The trees had been felled and there was an estate of bleak newly-built houses with the mud of construction still round them. Why did they always pull the trees down? But the English always did! He'd noticed it as a child. They even seemed to resent them. Were trees too soft, with their leisurely bowing and spreading of arms in the wind, like a comment on men?

Beyond, where the trees started again, tall and close together, he saw the chimneys of what looked like a big house.

He found a hole in the fence and went through. Was it the manor house? At any rate, nobody lived there. The garden was overgrown with tall bushes, with the trace here and there of an old rose tree, pushing its blooms through in a last gesture.

And behind lay the house itself, like a palace, but shuttered, with weeds up to its doors and climbing all over the steps from the garden, filling the stone urns that had been used once for flowers. There was a fountain in the garden, almost hidden by moss and weeds, quite dry. Here again roses of every colour peeped through, single bright heads.

Most of the windows were smashed. He looked through a crack in the shutters and saw a magnificent hall inside with a painted ceiling,

its gilt and blue stars still bright. It was bare of furniture. And just as he looked in a bird flew across, its wings fluttering in a strip of sunlight for a moment.

He tried to imagine the time when the lawns had been smooth and the urns full of daffodils and tulips. The meadow would lie beyond as it did now, rising and falling gently, with a few ancient oaks in the middle, bent and knarled. People would be strolling up the steps. The windows would be hining in the sun, with immense curtains behind them. In the hall there would be deep armchairs, a long refectory table, oak chests.

There was a squat building to one side, apart, that might be the chapel. It was older than the rest, with that sweet, native look of mediaeval things. It nestled more comfortably among the weeds than the rest of the house.

A fat raven flew up from one of the chimneys, startled as he pushed through the bushes.

On the train back from Meedham he kept talking loudly --- his voice seemed to have got used to it. But gradually he became aware of the other people in the compartment and began talking in an undertone. Pinkie, too, underwent the same change in her face. She gazed down at the floor, sometimes biting her lip. The chimneys and slate roofs of outer London passed. The dream was over. It was a dusty, warm evening.

Elizabeth had said she wanted to 'bring them out'; their lives weren't grand enough. There was going to be a 'terribly swish ball' in London, and she'd get tickets for all of them. Gordon would come as well. It would be in about two weeks' time. Granville knew this was

conscious triumph had died. Where was it in his life now? How was it bearing fruit?

He began to tell himself that, indeed, if he came to think of it, his life was changing under the influence of that night, though the effects were difficult to perceive at first. Suppose their Meedham visit had been one of these effects? Pinkie's cheeks had been flushed with health there! Elizabeth, he told himself, had come as a saviour. And the news of the baby! It began to occur to him, in a slow light like that of dawn, that this was the first real answer --- in the flesh --- to his night of thought --- the first confirmation --- a touch from heaven --- the night of the eclipse transformed to flesh, in the shape of a new breathing life! There was his triumph!

At the same time, however, his body, and indeed his whole self, was sluggish, as if it couldn't meet this triumph. The triumph, apparently, hadn't reached his flesh. And he didn't know <sup>why</sup> shy. Nor was there a new life between him and Pinkie on account of the child. In fact, it had made no difference. Her comings and goings were as mechanical as before. She kept her job. The child was hidden away under the multiple noises and activities of London. It was no longer their property, as it had been in Meedham, for a moment.

And the problem of his return to Basrah hadn't changed: would he be going? Would they go together? Would she really come afterwards as she promised? Nor did the child bring them into closer confidence. They curled up together at night with no greater intimacy than before, nor less. She looked at him --- and he looked at her --- with no more promise. If anything, her look was barer than before; sometimes bleak, when she glanced at him. But the thought of the child always waylaid

There was no moral basis to his life. He did what he felt instinctively to be right, or else what other people expected of him: but there was no clear decision in between --- no necessary truthful course he knew he always had to follow, whatever other people expected of him and whatever his instincts said.

So, really, he had no self. He was like all the others! Just products! Their lives geared and moved by the city outside!

All the moral words were dead for him: good, bad, evil, wicked, sinful, virtuous. Meaningless! Imagine telling Pinkie she was 'wicked'. She'd laugh! Hanni, too! They'd feel complimented --- the 'wild' touch, you know! But was he different? There was only one moral criterion for them all --- 'What impression did I make on other people?' That brought a shadow over the mind --- that made you stop --- that was the only guide you had, what other people thought!

So they were guiding each other --- the blind leading the blind!

But he wouldn't be blind, and he wouldn't be led by the blind! Hadn't Dick told him one day that this was how Lady Godiva and King Arthur lived --- doing only what people expected of them? And he was going to join this disgraceful middle class sort of living? He had to protect himself --- keep himself intact --- think things out all the time --- stay apart!

Of course --- what was the night of the eclipse but his childhood breaking through? insisting on thinking the matter? <sup>out</sup> determined to find a path alone? wild for independence? That had been Abbott's Road! There you had a morality! In Abbott's Road you didn't follow what other people expected of you, there you had your likes and dislikes and these weren't the same as any other man's and you were allowed this difference!

with Beirut and Cairo: that was the main part of the report. But now came his suggestions for the future. There must be changes! And this was where he got stuck.

'What are you doing,' he asked himself, 'trying to force things with your mind? Why not rest, wait a bit, idle, let new thoughts form?' And he forced himself to disobey his torn, scolding nerves. And slowly, during a concert, a clear question began to form in his mind: 'What's your objection to finishing the report? Why do you hate the idea?' For all of a sudden he saw that he hated the idea of making any suggestions for the future!

He wanted to contract out of the whole bloody lot! He didn't want more progress, more machines, more education --- he didn't believe in it --- he hated it --- he wanted to withdraw --- and that was the only suggestion he could make!

But he was in the thick of it all, by his life, by his work: there was a contradiction he hadn't worked out!

And he realised that he still didn't understand how or why the 'middle class' as he always called them had come into being; nor what good they'd done, if any. He described them to himself as the instrument that had killed religion in people. They'd killed it in him! But why had they done it? How had it been allowed to happen? How had the movement got such a hold? How could he write them off historically, or in any other way? For he was one of them! He couldn't write off his own life, his work --- it couldn't be done!

And he set himself that task, quietly. He lay awake, his nerves at rest now, wondering how the answer would come. Could that be his last word about the 'middle class', about the new world he'd come into ---

that it was simply history gone wrong? and one just hoped it would come better again?

Next day there happened to be an argument between Dick and Pinkie in the music-room --- about the Prince Albert bridge, leading from Battersea park to Chelsea. There were plans to pull it down. But complaints had come in to the local council, hundreds of letters; the bridge was a fine example, people said, of Victorian design, one of the best, and there was no need to go on tearing down all Victorian London just because the fashions had changed. And Pinkie said she liked the bridge. She thought the upper struts were like wonderful strings of beads, especially at night when they were lit-up, whereas Dick said they looked more like a row of 'Edwardian watch-chains.' And then they began talking about Victorian houses. Pinkie said she got a cosy satisfaction from being in a real furnished Victorian house --- with all the trappings, it had to be the real job --- hideous towering doors and polished door-knobs, thick curtains and persian carpets, masses of cushions everywhere and knick-knacks and gaudy light-shades with tassles, and little inlaid tables --- everything 'purring like a wonderful luxurious cat' so that you really couldn't believe there was a real world outside --- nothing considered too small or trifling to be worked on carefully --- every tiny coffee cup a special work in itself, every table cloth and nail-file and embroidery-basket, as if the whole idea had been so flatter people, if they had money --- flatter every little taste and whim and desire!

Dick said he preferred the light and air. He was on the side of modern architecture.

"Oh, I agree it's suffocating," Pinkie said. "But then, perhaps every age finds the last one suffocating!"

And afterwards, when he was alone, thinking of it again, he asked himself, 'What did the Victorians feel suffocated by, to make all that clamour and extravagance?' Had they felt a similar suffocation with the world they'd been children in, which had made them undertake these proud excursions? He paused. Suppose the world before industries hadn't been so peaceful as he'd thought? Suppose there'd been decay and suffocation there, too, among certain people? --- never, of course, among most people, whose lives never changed, from generation to generation, but among the few whose thoughts led to change in the outside world? Suppose the nobility had collapsed at that time --- turned to pleasure --- lost interest in running the country, left even their own estates to clever agents and stewards? And suppose certain men had come to want the same pleasure --- the same colour and light --- as it seemed --- in their own lives --- the extravagance? Hadn't they achieved it, then, these certain men, in the heavy embroidered cloths and their towers and buttresses and endless knick-knacks, in Victorian times? hadn't that been the climax of the first industries? Suppose that those hideous Victorian shops and miniature palaces had renewed people's pride? Did the Victorians, in fact, give a terrific boost to life, which was suffocating and horrible to us? Without them, would country towns have become silent, deserted jewels of Georgian architecture?

Suppose that, in a way, industries had been a struggle for the light?

Suppose that only the gorgeous duke's carriage had seemed to have colour and light, as it had sped past, in that world before industries? and darkness had fallen on certain other men whose minds were nevertheless active, and who had dreams, ambitions, even visions? Wasn't this how

industries had started? Hadn't they come out of lonely men, as the revival of trade in the middle ages had come from the lonely towns, from those men who weren't in any blind connection with other people, not knights or serfs, but men who thought things over to themselves, in the silence of their minds? Wasn't the first machine that started industries, the spinning jenny conceived by a weaver, always alone in his work, separate from the other villagers, a lonely traveller who went from place to place selling his cloth, contemplative and pale compared with the labourers?

Wasn't that the character of industries --- of our whole world --- that they had sprung from men's minds, calculating and dreaming and arguing things over?

And what did that mean --- for his other thoughts --- for the night of the eclipse --- where did that connect?

Christ had been alone: was this the answer? He had severed himself from the blind connections --- from the inherited connections!

One by one the blind ties had gone in England --- the divine power of Rome, the divine power of the king, the divine power of the dukes. Was it the lonely concept of freedom that had been trying to shine all the time? Was this what Christ had given in his person? Perhaps this freedom was part of being withdrawn and alone; it was the hunger that went with being alone --- impatience of family, of priest, of pope, of king, nobility, of every blinding power over the mind! Certain men had done it; always a small group, and the others, the majority, had watched, inheriting a little more freedom, if to lack blind ties was freedom! Was this what Christ had done --- made freedom the only path to God? Was that in all his movements, --- freedom? in everything he said, a wonderful

lightness? Was that, also, what those certain men had been trying to realise in their factories? Was it that they'd wanted a lighter world, where people wouldn't just inherit the life-long task for their hands, where their thoughts wouldn't only be those that had grown before they were born? Was it to make a world where people could unbend from blind work and leave it to the machines? Was this behind their greed and cruelty, without them knowing it, turning them into a movement that within fifty years of coming to birth had control of parliament and had turned the country from a rural community into a throbbing factory crossed with roads and canals and railway-lines? Was it to make a world free from the dark, pagan shadows as well; a universe without fear or guilt, so that when we looked up at the sky we should feel ourselves separate from it and clear in our freedom, not haunted by its frowns and storms? Was that why he'd seen the eclipse as he'd done, mathematically? Had he simply been projecting the freedom that was in him, so that he could see the sun change and go dark without the slightest qualm or fear, unlike Abu Kath'm who did show fear? Was this freedom an unparalleled freedom so that for the first time millions of people could face the changes and terrors of the universe with stillness? Was that from Christ? Was that the stillness he'd had in his own person? Had religion penetrated so much into us that it was now in the pores of our skin and we didn't know any more what it was like to be pagan and the victim of every omen and fright in the universe? How much we took for granted! Was this freedom presupposed in the tiniest things, such as our visits to the doctor, whom we left without the dark feeling that we ourselves through some fearful stain were responsible for our sickness and horribly involved, but stood apart even from our bodies with a cool stillness and detachment --- which

made us seem thinkers and scholars compared with the pagans? Everything had become phenomenon for us! It was in our consciences, which kept a moral principle as something separate from us, and stopped out plunge into dark self-interest; it was in our sense of the universe as separate; it was in our sense of our bodies; nothing stuck to us; wasn't that the fulfilment of an unparalleled freedom?

And what was this freedom but the spark Christ said could be found in every person in his lonely state, apart from his place in the world, no matter what his blind ties were, even a slave, a woman, an unbeliever? And what had happened since his death but one struggle after another against the blind ties that hid this divinity in which a man was perfectly free, perfectly alone and perfectly beyond the touch of other men?

Was this the kind of justification he'd been looking for all this time in the middle class? How else would he know his own freedom, how else would he be thinking as he was at this moment, unless what he called the middle class had done its work, in the nineteenth century, of removing the last blind tie?

Yes, industries had disinherited everybody! People no longer had a squire to lean on, to take their glow from, or their punishment. That had all gone out a century or more ago. The farmer with his homely face had gone. The village had gone. Everything blind had gone, everything you could inherit naturally, in the place where you were born! What was that but turning people, through the unthinkable pain of upheaval, into their own masters?

Was that where Christ had been leading us all this time, to where we could contemplate him in perfect freedom, free even from the dark

weight of religious advice and supervision, from the priests and councils? Was that what Granville himself had been trying to arrive at when he asked himself what life he would have in England, and whether it would mean joining the old class of authority? Was he seeking a way of perpetuating the aristocracy he saw in these men, their splendid independence, without their power? Was that what was going to happen in England? Would people take the form they had found and admired in these men, their easy gestures and authority, and perpetuate them in themselves without the servants, wealth and influence? Was that what made this class of authority bearable to him, that it was pure now, namely, devoid of power? so that these men could only assert themselves by what they were in themselves, as Christ, the everlasting model, had done? Was it this that rendered the concept of the gentleman real --- its being shorn of authority? Was that why aristocracy had existed, to cultivate the touch of divinity, in leisure and without any hemming-in by other men or by work, in perfect independence, spreading itself to the utmost in vast rooms and lovely parks? Was the aristocracy the heart of every country, however dead it might be now? was it the soul of a country? did the soundness of a country come from its aristocracy's soundness? Had the middle class made it possible for every man to inherit it, now that the form had been arrived at and settled, only without the vast rooms and lovely parks now, without the blind authority over other men? Was the middle class itself only an instrument for freedom, moving by blind function all the time, not a visionary body at all? Was its role to establish the utmost possible satisfactions of power and ambition for every man --- in speed, comfort, leisure, and marvellous flights through hundreds of different experiences all over the earth --- so that

in the end there would be no wonder left in power at all, only the contemplation of all the wonder that lay beyond men; so that the last immensely ambitious explorations of space, in cunning rockets travelling at unthinkable speeds, would end in a marvelling contemplation of the huge, still, blue empyrean?

Was this why the middle class had destroyed even the blind tie of religion, so that it would be a conscious one?

Had the great reiterated principle of the middle class been that men were the uppermost reality, and men must be served; had this been their function, to repeat it until the stature of every person was assured and admitted, and the touch of divinity could then be seen? Were we on the threshold of that new epoch, in which the stature of a man would be totally beyond his place and position? Had the middle class only been serving Christ all the time in trying to move towards the light, like a machine that could only go on until it had disrupted and consumed all humanity? Were they the little technicians of Christ, blind to the force they were creating? Was that why he found no real morality in Dick but was stirred and thrilled by his daring and intimately exploring thoughts, that tried to uncover the light all the time? Was that why he found Dick's ideas 'mental', separate from the life he led, because there was no total, driving moral vision? Had the middle class now performed the great menial task required by Christ? Had they strained further and further towards the light, away from the dark and marshy habits of endowing people with divine powers, and from superstition, so that at last the human being stood free to contemplate himself apart from his own fears and his own hopes and interests, as Christ had done throughout his mission? Was a detachment similar to that of Christ

growing on all humanity? After the shocks delivered by the middle class to the peace in which most people had been locked before, as Abu Kath'm was still locked, as he'd been locked in Abbott's Road as a child --- after the point of self-destruction had been reached in millions of people --- would the most of self-recall come as it had come in him, through recollection of the previous life of peace and blindness, and through the sense of having lost a guiding hand? Was it only a fulfilment of Christ's advice to give up the family, to give up all ties, for the one tie in which a person was no longer the victim of interest or even blind loyalty, but chose the light for himself? Were people giving up the dark, blind, suffocating part of family so as to give their children the light of freedom; wasn't that how the children of the great houses had been brought up, unpossessed by their parents? Wasn't that what Jean Philby had talked to him about, when she'd said that a mother had no 'rights' over her child? was it the light in which all ambitions were dead, and we were free to contemplate other people, even the children of our own flesh, in their freedom? Did every man have to become one of the disciples --- even those working in the fields, even the Samaritans, the heathens, the fallen women, the Romans!

Yet it was say, this freedom. He was sunk down. There was so much responsibility. So little consolation. A terrible legacy! But it was there. You couldn't turn away.

And each time, perhaps, there was a new tie. We, in our world, had the tie of other men --- we couldn't get through to the beyond --- to our single selves --- we couldn't hear the silence --- that was our struggle! We had to contract out, in some way --- in our hearts ---!

He was numb with his thoughts, yet peaceful.

Granville had noticed this at training school: there was no brotherhood in Dick. If you asked him for help --- it might only be moving a desk across the room --- he did it perfunctorily and left the room in a kind of dream, as if helping someone put his own self out of action. Dick seemed to say, 'We're all alone, and if we meet and have a good time together, we do so by conscious social agreement, which would be broken if we did anything to displease each other. Our liking each other means that we have interests which coincide. Dick would cancel an appointment at the last minute --- say, at the cafe in the Commercial road --- and add, "But you go ahead, old sport", as if only the event --- sitting in the cafe --- interested Granville. Partly it was his poor estimation of his own company, so that he gave the impression both of an agreeable modesty and an unpleasant coldness.

Granville had stopped trying to make appointments with him. His pride would be hurt by Dick's, "Oh," followed by a pause, "can't quite manage that, old sport! Another day." Or he might say. "I've got to cover the annual flower-show at Hindhead for the Sperm News and Chancre Gazette," meaning he was meeting a girl.

And he himself had fallen into a similar mental habit recently: he fought shy of doing anything which he couldn't construe to himself as useful in some way, and this meant, generally, useful to himself. It was difficult for him, for instance, to pick up the phone and pass the time of day with someone. There had to be an appointment in mind. Otherwise he felt 'soft'. Sometimes he would invent an occasion in order to pass the time of day --- he might ring up Glenning for some office-information which he didn't need. Giving Dick a bottle of wine had been difficult for him. He'd had to force himself to do it. All round him

he felt a moral vacuum. The reason for being nice to people and doing things for them wasn't clear. There seemed no reason beyond self-interest, and so it became a habit to present to himself the element of self-interest to absolve himself of 'softness'. This 'softness' was a sense that other people would set him at naught and assume he was idle and without important commitments. To be natural wasn't enough. He feared being rebuffed --- having the phone put down on him, for instance, if he laid himself bare to people. He feared people saying they were 'busy'. The word was coming to have a sting for him. Dick, Hanni and Pinkie were all 'busy'. So he made an effort to be 'busy' as well.

Dick seemed to like a methodical relation. Once, years before, they'd spent a week-end together at an inn near Reading, and had agreed to go half-way with the expenses, and at precisely ten o'clock on Saturday evening, as they sat over the lounge-fire, Dick turned to him and said quietly, "Well, Petty Officer, I think it's about time for you to take over 'mine host'. I think that's as fair a division as an untrained mathematical mind could devise --- we got here about a quarter to ten last night, I'm standing you ---" with a twinkling smile --- "that extra quarter of an hour, and we're leaving about that time tomorrow night, aren't we? So the bills are yours from now on!" Dick had no dark reserves about money. He always made it light and clear, on an objective basis which left no unpleasantness.

He spent one evening with Dick at Hampton Court, as during the first weeks of his leave. But the river was cold and bleak, not as he remembered it from the summer at all. Only the trees were lovely, on the other side of the river, golden and yellow, close to the mellow red

name 'Grove' spelled the end of his life with Pinkie for him. Indeed, the end of life.

Dick also told him more about Lady Godiva and King Arthur --- how they'd discovered Hanni was living with him, before they were married. Lady Godiva had found a pair of knickers on the back of his armchair. King Arthur called him down to Harrow for a 'conference' at once; those were the days when he was still getting an allowance. Anyway, the old boy cut him off. Lady Godiva said the pants were filthy --- that was the main bone of contention: where was the girl's pride? Dick said he hadn't located it yet.

"Where does the girl dress and undress?" Lady Godiva had asked during the 'conference'.

"Well, where we kip down!"

"Good Lord! In front of you? I never undressed in front of your father for ten years after we were married!"

"Why," Dick asked her with a laugh, "what did you have to hide?"

Nowadays, he said, they accused him of taking up with people who were 'neither fish, flesh nor fowl', a favourite expression of Lady Godiva's, meaning people like Hanni and Granville --- nobody knew where they 'came' from. But Pinkie was 'quality'. From the day Dick told them that she was 'a real Grysham down to her uncut toe-nails' they always asked questions about her. Did she 'keep up' with the Aldercote part of the family? Was she ever invited to the house? Would she 'come into anything'? Did she know the present Lord Aldercote --- 'something in fertilisers', they believed? Everything she did was recited to them, and they approved of it all, even the story of how she got dead-drunk in Reading and lay out with the tin-cans in a backyard all night. So

'eighteenth century'! Well, the Gryshams had always been famous for that sort of thing, hadn't they? A real 'buccaneering family'!

As a child, Dick said, he'd always had 'conferences' with the old boy. His finances were discussed and an 'accounts book' brought out, with debit and credit columns. On each page there was a separate item --- 'Tuck Shop Allowance', 'Clothes Allowance', 'Income from Gardening', 'Breakages and Fines' --- he was fined for breaking crockery, raiding the larder, swearing and whistling and 'passing wind' at table, and for staying in the lavatory for more than seven minutes at a 'sitting'.

"There was a first-class row last week," Dick went on. "I totted up the old boy's assets on a piece of paper, to see what I'd get when he passed beyond. I wrote 'King Arthur's Assets' at the top, then made two columns, one for his assets and another for his likely debts and taxes. And he found it! I went down there for lunch and left it on the coffee table. He nearly had a fit!"

"It must have been quite a shock," Granville said.

"Well, that's the way he thinks, in debit and credit columns! He's done that all his life. For every hundred quid he's spent on me he's thought of getting back a hundred quidsworth of filial duty plus a five-percent dividend. I don't think that man's done a single clean act off the balance-sheet in his life!"

Granville asked him if he hated him and to his surprise Dick said, "No, he's an amusing old stick! And he takes after me so much! Really, he quite liked me totting up his assets, it's just the sort of thing he'd do himself!"

Lady Godiva had never liked cutting Dick off like that. She tried to persuade King Arthur to put him back 'on half-pay', but he

wouldn't hear of it. She said the advantage of having Dick on an allowance was that it got him down to Harrow once a month to pick it up, whereas now he hardly came at all. Half the allowance would get him there 'bi-monthly', at least. But King Arthur said no, not since Dick had become a 'bedouin', meaning he lived with Hanni.

And Lady Godiva said to Dick one day with a smile, "You know, you're so easy to deal with --- if only your father knew --- because you're completely selfish, like me!"

vivid and deliberate, the girls in tight trousers and the young men with ascots, fancy shirts, Italian-style suits. There was a strange, unfleshly atmosphere: there was sex --- in people's glances <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>--- in the vibrant pallor of some of the girl's faces --- but it was detached, odourless, like a memory, a thought, enticing, brilliant --- but almost vanishing.

It was a long, pleasant room with settees the length of one wall and a few armchairs, with tall potted plants, behind one of which Dick had taken his pale girl --- she'd got the evening off from the Marquis specially for him. There was the sound of traffic outside, and a constant twinkling and glowing of lights from the street. At a distance 'Joe Clockwork' looked erect and striking; he had a strange presence; Pinkie said she'd heard he was a 'chronic snob', and he used Hanni by showing her off at parties as 'exotic'. There was a lingering softness in Clockwork's manner of addressing people, and in the slow way his eyes fell on to objects, but his neck and shoulders seemed too thick for this delicate manner to be natural. His eyes were deep in his head, dark and unblinking, and without their deliberate softness of expression they would have been relentless. Suddenly Clockwork lifted his head and made a brief, high-pitched laugh like a scream, then his face was serious again; he was talking to Hanni, and she was smiling calmly, having just said something. When they were all introduced Clockwork took Pinkie's hand very briefly, with no grip at all, touching only her first two fingers, and smiled in a bland way, seeming not to look at her at all; so soft was his gaze; but then, quickly so as to be hardly noticed, he gave her a quick, flashing glance of scrutiny; and once more the bland, leisurely smile was on his face. He turned his attentions to Hanni again, and put his arm round her shoulder; "darling, angel, " he murmured, but

*Sital*

They were missing the real thrill, that of love! ~~But, he knew, Dick~~  
~~couldn't pay the price for that: he had to hold himself apart, that was~~  
 Dick's discipline --- he was a recluse, he was locked inside his own  
 desires, these raw, ecstatic yearnings! And Pinkie couldn't have risen  
 to it, either; she, too, had to turn away, into herself! Only Hanni  
 could have done it: her shyness was something circumstantial --- it could  
 be broken down; again, she and Granville were on one side, Pinkie and  
 Dick on the other. Pinkie and Dick needed this other, lesser, more  
 painfully thrilling sex. It was their paganism. But it was too  
 rarified and subtle, not to say deliberate, to be really pagan; there  
 couldn't be a lasting glow --- nothing of the awful splendour that Pinkie's  
 body had suggested --- finally, there couldn't be a real thrill, because  
 no one really gave himself; the conventions had to be kept, finally,  
 because of the thrill of breaking them!

And underneath there was hate; the self was hated, in its  
 nakedness, and was only offered to the other person obliquely, with shaded  
 eyes, in silence, the brain always conscious, never succumbing even to the  
 thrill itself, except in the terrible last stage of orgasm, that was like  
 an agony, if it ever came.

Yet there wasn't any evidence of hate in Pinkie or Dick! Hanni  
showed far more! She looked dark sometimes, with something negative  
 brooding in her. But she had more of a flow of love, for all that, than  
 the other two. She was only less sweet because of this flow, which  
 found no rest. A few months before, just after his return from Basrah,  
 he and Pinkie had sat in the bathroom at Hampton Court while Hanni lay in  
 the water, naked. He'd forgotten it! That sort of thing was the form  
 of love! Yes, he'd forgotten it!

quiet talks; he felt he'd watched those eyes, flickering gently against the smoke, while she took pause for her next sentence, that was always strangely muffled and reminiscent, for hours and days in the last three months. "I don't understand that," he murmured after a time, feeling out her position. She said that surely if everybody 'let themselves go' there'd be chaos? He asked why letting oneself go meant chaos. She thought it didn't mean chaos necessarily, but a 'lot of nastiness' came up from 'underneath'; she looked at him with raised eyebrows for a moment, seeming to ask for confirmation. He said she must believe people were nasty underneath; did she think that? She wouldn't say yes or no; she put the question back to him; what did he think? And he said, "No"; She was silent, thinking it over.

"How do you feel?" he asked her.

"Rather awful!"

He remembered just in time that he wasn't supposed to know the cause; so he tried to go on talking. What would she rather have in a man, vehemence or cruelty? But she was silent again; he asked, would she rather have feelings 'come out' or 'stay brooding inside'? She replied that she thought 'brooding inside' was better, and he was just about to make an exclamation of surprise when she silently burst into tears, sitting quite still, without putting her hand up to her face, making not a sound. He got up and said, "Come on, let's go for a walk." She followed him helplessly while he got her coat and put it round her shoulders, and she dried her eyes before they got down to the street; ~~after an hour or so, during which they were mostly silent, she was all right again and even timidly and shyly gay.~~

→ There was no reply from Nevinson so far, and Dick gave no sign

he could see Big Ben, its clock shining like a harvest moon; but he was mostly aware of the silence of the Abbey.

'I'll really live in England,' he thought, 'I'll look at it all, I'll study it, I won't just let all this history stand behind me, I'll run my fingers through it like through gold!' It suddenly seemed a terrible waste not to be feasting his eyes on it every day --- people had been laying up treasures here for nearly a thousand years! No more hours at home, talking and drinking and dreaming!

He went back to the Abbey in daylight and joined a party of tourists. He resolved to visit every castle and old house near London. But the Abbey disappointed him. The inside seemed to have no past at all! It had all been done away with. It was more like a sculptor's backyard. The air was full of activities of state --- the coronations and great funerals. But this lacked life. No sweetness was left. Only outside, where the walls touched the lawn as they had from the beginning, was there the infinite past. It was the same with the little chapel of St. Margaret's at its side, like a younger sister, lying immediately under the Abbey's towering presence --- only outside, with its low and humble form and its ancient, shining-grey walls, did it still have sweetness. But inside, where there were bright prosperous pews, there was an air of the 1914 war, of dread and regret and howling mistakes. It reminded him of the hymn, 'Abide with me', and it brought ridiculous tears to his eyes just thinking of the way people sang it, in hushed voices, with a strange helplessness, as if beasts were climbing all over them and beginning to crush them as their voices died further and further into the silence. And there were two flags from the time of Napoleon --- when he'd threatened to invade England: they were in tatters now, almost

the management 'frowned on it'.

The most puzzling thing about the evening was that Dick showed not the slightest awareness of his leave having expired over a week before! He was quietly genial all the time and didn't once mention the office.

After dinner Dick puffed at a cigar, which looked enormous against his delicate face; but after a time he stubbed it out and said it felt like 'smoking a business-man'.

The play at the New Studio jarred on their nerves; everything was said in a sneering vein --- bloody-this and sodding-that all the way through, but falsely, without real life. It was a social 'document'. The working people were slovenly, foul-mouthed, envious, they talked in a biting and leering way which he himself had only heard after leaving Abbott's Road! It was a 'higher world' picture of the working masses, and even without a plot, or point, or power, it went down well. An American critic had written that this was 'a heart-felt denunciation of the British caste-system.' An air of the dead Thirties lingered round it --- dead social battles. It was safe indignation, addressed to a prosperous society, about conditions everybody agreed on because they were history.

Dick said nothing afterwards, only, "Sorry it wasn't better!" and they left each other casually, again without reference to his leaving England.

Later in the week when they saw each other Dick said he'd been surprised that Granville hadn't liked the play; he would have thought it was 'just up his street', since it had portrayed 'a chunk' of his childhood! Granville opened his mouth to remonstrate, but he hadn't

There were cries from all over the hall during every dance: someone would laugh at the top of his voice, or a couple would plunge into a table and upset everything. You certainly couldn't describe these people as the tame citizens of democracy! They stood, legs astride, staring on to the floor with flushed faces, or they raced the women round without the slightest etiquette; one of the women roared as loud as the men and kept shouting for no obvious reason, "At-a-boy, at-a-boy!" The giraffe-lady lowered her head during one dance, after another couple had deliberately 'barged' her, and drove her little hairy horns into a man's tummy, making him shriek with a laugh, "Letitia, no, Letitia, bitch!" From this developed a 'bull-fight' in which one man mounted another man's back and tried to tear another man off his! But this interfered with the dancing and the M.C. put a stop to it, saying at the top of his voice over the microphone, "I'm sorry, there, sirs, I'm sorry, there, sirs, you, sirs, yes, please, sirs, I'm very sorry, I'm sorry!", which was completely incomprehensible to those at the bar and on the balcony, who couldn't see the 'bull-fight'; one of those at the bar, hearing the voice, suddenly rushed into the hall with a half-pint tankard of whisky and soda in his hand shouting the same words, "I'm sorry, sirs, yes, sirs, you, please, sirs, yes, sirs, I'm very sorry!", weaving his way among the couples at a lightning speed, without spilling a drop of his drink, and then ran back into the bar again; he ended facing one of the rollers, and cried, "Terminus! All change!"

It was all like an extraordinary pre-arranged performance, one event fitting with the queerest logic into the next. Laura Lady Maine, the guest of the evening, appeared for a few moments, looking frail and dazzled and bemused by the publicity being poured on her: people got up

kept glancing sideways at Pinkie in an admiring way, but this was lost on her as she was concentrating on her food. People at the next table called out to Elizabeth and waved; one of the women also waved to Pinkie, and Granville recognised one of the guests from Elizabeth's dinner-party at Meedham, the wife of the Aden man who'd argued about shooting. Bewley-Patton sat quietly sipping white wine; he said he'd got it specially, and there was a crate under the table, which was why he had to spend so much time there; it was lovely Moselle wine with the 'mountain-streams' in it, only it had got a bit hot. He was remarkably like Nigel, only a little older and mellower. Elizabeth asked Granville when he'd be off again, and he said, "I shan't be, at all!", with a smile. What did he mean? she asked, blinking again. Pinkie told her he'd resigned, and Bewley-Patton turned to him confidentially and said, "Did it get you down?" as if one could change jobs endlessly. This appealed to Granville and he replied, "It did, rather ---", in a between-us-men tone. Pinkie chuckled and said to Elizabeth, "I like that 'rather', don't you?"

"Well, I hope you're doing right," Elizabeth said in a grave way.

Granville felt a spasm of irritation; "What's it got to do with you in any case?"

"Nothing, darling, nothing!" she cried in her light-hearted way, laughing. "It must be the school-marm in me, I suppose!" And she turned away with an air of disdain mixed curiously with fluttering respect.

Bewley-Patton sat there and gave him a smile as if to say, "They can be annoying, can't they?" The music started again upstairs, a loud thumping on the floor, and people began to drift away. He danced with Elizabeth again while Pinkie danced with Clockwork, who had left the card-table to look, he told Pinkie, at 'the flesh'. It was a slow dance with

Elizabeth rang up Pinkie that day and told her there was to be a sequel, a gorgeous boat-party on the Thames with champagne and guitar-playing, and they were to come as her guests --- nothing to pay this time; it would be on one of those pleasure-steamers, which would cruise down to the Isle of Dogs and back again.

He felt this new life they were leading confirmed the rightness of his resignation; he was moving in all kinds of circles --- nothing in English life was closed to him now. After all, he must learn about his own country, mustn't he?

Hanni came to the house later in the week and told him that her zebra costume had won Clockwork several 'good invitations'; he 'collected' cocktail parties. Also she said that a friend of Clockwork's had danced with Pinkie and exclaimed afterwards, because she danced with such abandon, "My God, that woman throws herself at you!", with an expression of offended disgust; she added that one could always tell a 'small' person by what he thought about Pinkie; this chap was 'an unwholesome little social climber'; she said that Pinkie had looked magnificent dancing, and that she doubted if she'd even been aware of the 'silly little trout', who had a nasty habit of knocking his ring against the wood of his chair to show that he had one. She spoke in her customary low, keening way, and he felt a protective indignation against the young man on Pinkie's behalf, though he hadn't set eyes on him. They agreed with each other that Pinkie gave herself to people without discrimination and allowed her 'wonderful dignity' to be brought within the compass of their pettiness.

She also told him that 'dad' was an invention of Joy Celeste's to keep people away from her flat and also for use against those 'like you', Hanni added with a smile, who were bold enough to penetrate there and make themselves 'troublesome'.

against 'brass-hats' at Corps headquarters; a young african nationalist against a British colonial magistrate; a poor family in Wales threatened with an eviction-order; an Irishman, drinking wildly and cussing 'the dirty bloody Limeys', trying to sing for a living; a kind of suffragette play in which a man's healthy desires caused his wife's suicide. The trouble was that when you added all these protests together they made you hate nearly everybody; which left no one to address the protest to! Those people who weren't bosses might be foremen, those who weren't foremen might be brass-hats, those who were none of these might be British, those who weren't British could easily be a man --- for the suffragette play it was enough to be a man! So each new play<sup>y</sup> knocked the last one down. Last week you might have been morally indignant on behalf of the working man but this week you would be just as indignant against him for being a white man. At first Granville came out of the theatre burning with indignation every time, but he was now inured to it.

He noticed that he didn't sit through the plays in a spirit of criticism as he had done during the first one about the sailor in Liverpool; he wondered if a change had come about in his life that had removed a certain essential fibre. Most of the plays he simply sat through, hardly hearing them; he took pleasure in the glow of the lights on the stage, in a piece of scenery that suggested woods or the African bush; he would doze off in his seat and wake up with a start when the set protest-speech began, which it usually did towards the end of the second act; after that he could pop off again. As in the first play there was a lot of swearing. There were deliberately shocking references --- to homosexuality, to Laura Lady Maine, to the government. When the play was dull and stupid he was unwilling to admit to himself that this was so,

because he then felt classed among the renegade people whom the play was attacking. The protest-speeches covered up for the lack of drama and truth. In one of the plays a character said of another, "He's always got his eye on the Maine chance!" and there were waves of laughter; this laughter had the tone of the forbidden, as if mentioning the word 'Maine' on the stage was brave in itself, laying bare the social conventions. There were regular targets --- the royal family, the Church, the 'pukka sahib' from India; whatever no longer had power in modern life. There were trembling protests against a ruling class that no longer existed, against an empire that had been disbanded.

Dick was offended by the 'squealing' in the plays; he said that a man who suffered shouldn't put the blame on other people, But Granville only smiled. There wasn't a trace of the 'orang-utang' in him. He seemed to have little objection to anything.

flesh, so stayed in the floating regions, lulling him and calling him from the bad life. To verify this he went and heard Schubert's 'Death and the Maiden' quartet, and waited for the movement of deadly pause in it, where the outer silence is captured for some moments, and its rhythm actually enters life, joined to the music in thorough perfection; and again when it came he was aware of something passing him by, an awful procession, like that of a king, that lulled him and called to him and tried to reduce his flesh, but couldn't take him wholly; again he hadn't absorbed it into the flesh of his life, turning it to blood.

Aunt Beatrice called and had them over to lunch; Pinkie had predicted this --- Deryk would tell Beatrice about the river-party and their social stock would soar up. They had a meal under a portrait of one of the eighteenth century Gryshams. Beatrice was all charm and flashed them glances; her wit was working overtime, but suddenly, after the coffee, as if he and Pinkie hadn't come up to her new expectations, her charm broke --- he was in the middle of saying something about the sheikh of Rubath when she suddenly turned a withering eye on him and got up with, "Well, I can't stay here all day!", and swept out of the room, leaving Deryk to clear up after her, so to speak. Deryk did his best, and said, "Mummy's so tired these days, poor thing!" Pinkie's theory afterwards was that the old girl had realised their invitation to the river-party was a 'fluke': she had a 'nose' for these things.

Again Granville was aware of betraying himself to an implacable verdict whenever he said anything more than good-evening or "What will you have to drink?" He tried as hard as he could not to say what came straight into his head, and never to say anything that brought a cloud

over people's faces --- any thoughtful remark might do this, it seemed --- but it was impossible; suddenly a hot thought would break from his mind and he would feel exposed to the contempt of others, imaginary as he knew it was. He feared their conclusions, like iron bars in front of his real self. He told himself that they were only 'iron bars' if he attributed importance to them; he tried to think of himself as a small and insignificant creature who had no right to people's good opinion; for only a high image of himself could be taken prisoner by other people and put into bars; a low image left him free! But when the next occasion arose his pride would come back like an unbreakable spring. He was surprised how much pride there was in his life. He had no work, no job, but he dressed himself up sometimes in his office-togs and sat at his desk, making quite useless notes on a travel-book or something; he realised when he did this that it was because he was ashamed of himself; but more than this, he was ashamed because he saw himself as someone else would see him --- lying on the bed for hours, listening to the 'Creole Shake' for hours waiting impatiently for the next phone-call; he wasn't ashamed in himself, left to himself, but he was when he imagined somebody else's eyes on his life; it was social shame that came from his not being properly alone; he was no longer ever alone, really. He remembered feeling just before Meedham that his loneliness was now full --- his self was full --- because he had Christ; but this thought was quite incomprehensible to him now; the lonely hours were bleak; he warmed them with music or wine! He asked himself again and again, 'What has happened to the night of the eclipse?' But he never got beyond the question.

He would suddenly have a fit of social shame that he was getting up too late and would set the alarm for an earlier hour, just after dawn;

Pinkie thought he was mad, but he said he liked the dawns! He would get up briskly, dress and shave, not linger in his dressing gown. But there was nothing to do; there wasn't even anything to think about, for he found that thoughts came easier to him when he was sprawled on the bed in old clothes, than when he was dressed and shaved for the office and sitting at his desk.

He went into a cageteria near St. Paul's for a morning coffee, to revive his memories of when he'd worked at the head office two years before, and as he was collecting his coffee from the counter he suddenly took it into his head --- partly because he was glum --- to smile at the girl serving him, as a gracious act to throw off the darkness of his life, to try to bring a brief, tiny light to another human creature unknown to him, without ambitions for himself. And the effect was instant. At first she was absorbed in the mechanical business of handing out steaming cups of coffee, but then she smiled back at him in a delighted way, her tired, worn face awakened in a moment, and he heard her say to the other serving girl as he walked to his table, "You can always tell a gentleman, can't you?" He nearly dropped his cup with confusion and hurried to a chair behind one of the pillars, hiding from her in case he did something to besmirch her image of him, and to show his real life! After he'd sat down he took out a penail and began writing a definition of 'the gentleman', with surprising clarity considering his state: 'First, to be true to your feelings. Second, to be enquiring of others, to show no power, to be gracious, to harbour no grievances, not to be competitive, not to pay undue attention to appearances. Third, to call out the good seed in other people, to forgive and protect, not to judge in silence. Fourth, to speak fearlessly, to be rash and wild for the truth, not to study

~~Baerah, though her birthplace wasn't two hundred miles away. And she spoke Arabic fluently.~~

*as if his arrival had been a year ago,*  
They talked on about nothing in particular, and she got him

another drink. ~~Apparently he was right that the young man with pleasant eyes was called Gerald. She said he was something in plastics, also in the City, and was a cousin of the Gryshams, Pinkie's family.~~ It got dark and the lights were visible from the street below, rather silver, like ~~strong~~ moonlight. Then to his relief the guests began leaving downstairs. The cars outside started up, making an unholy roar in the narrow street. And Hanni rose, having unconsciously performed her role of nurse.

"I'll go and collect Dick," she murmured. *And*

~~making good weather with his schoolgirls, don't you think?~~

~~"He did rather." He laughed, and moved himself for a moment.~~

~~she a schoolgirl!~~

~~"Not a model or something?"~~

*l.c.*

As *she* ~~they~~ went to the door he said, overlooking the reticence she

liked to keep on the subject, "What sort of people do you interpret for Hanni? Big oil sheiks and that sort of thing?"

"Not exactly," she murmured. ~~and that was all.~~

~~"Come and see..."~~ she added, *'Come over and see us!'* ~~as she went down~~

~~the stairs. Nobody else will except on Fine Bank holidays!"~~

"We'd love to!"

After a time he heard the front door close, and ~~Pinkie's foot steps on the stairs.~~ There, everything was all right after all!

CHAPTER 2.

But now they were alone together he ~~couldn't bear to face~~ <sup>couldn't bear to face</sup> her.

That was the pattern between them. He sat on in the attic room in the darkness <sup>for</sup> Hanni had ~~involuntarily~~ <sup>by accident</sup> switched the light ~~off~~ <sup>on</sup> when she went. <sup>He heard</sup> Pinkie cleared <sup>ing</sup> up downstairs. <sup>Why didn't she come up</sup> ~~She must realize what~~ <sup>to say? Surely it meant something? But why</sup> ~~she didn't tell him?~~ <sup>didn't he go downstairs to her?</sup> ~~But she rarely did realize.~~ ~~She didn't~~ ~~thought anything of dancing with a clerk from Kurdistan, apparently.~~

~~But, as she'd said to him one evening in Basrah, I'm not perfect, darling.~~

~~Don't expect such a terrific lot from me, please!~~ But he couldn't face

~~a casual relation.~~ He could go downstairs now, ~~and chuck~~ <sup>and chuck</sup> her under the chin and have another drink, making a joke of it, ~~and the~~ ~~matter would probably heal itself.~~ It was what he actually wanted to do, with all his heart. But he couldn't!

Later there would be a quarrel; a sudden rash word followed by tears. He would then pour everything out in a long speech, going into the whys and wherefores of her errors and sometimes, though more rarely, the whys and wherefores of his own, while he strode up and down the room gesticulating, a glare splitting his brow, his shoulders hunched up ~~like~~ like someone trying to force his way into a tunnel. ~~There was~~

~~what for?~~ The theme would be moral: what their lives ought to be like together. Meanwhile her eyes

would begin to flicker ~~more and more~~ <sup>she</sup> and she would stifle a yawn. ~~His~~ <sup>begin to</sup> words would ~~make her feel~~ <sup>imprisoned in a torrent of words, suffocated,</sup> ~~as if~~ <sup>drowning.</sup> ~~stopping the light~~ Once launched on a theme he was beyond

Strange, his fear of having a child. He was always advocating children. He remembered doing so once with Dick Pollocke at training school, and a bitter argument started. Pollocke said he hated contraceptives and certainly didn't intend having a child every two years through not using them: so the easiest thing was to bring the children off. Granville said that this was the same as killing them. And Pollocke replied that it was just disposing of an unconscious embryo, like a toe-nail that grew 'without having a mind', and which we pared down occasionally. How could murder, much less cruelty, arise in the case of something already, so to speak, dead?

"But a woman's spirit changes!" Granville cried. "All of her awaits the child --- milk goes to her breasts --- her thoughts turn towards it --- then you suddenly cut it off --- you murder her as well!"

"No," said Pollocke crisply, "an embryo grows in her womb, and it's removed. That's all that happens."

"Well, people get punished for doing it..."

"By whom?" Pollocke asked.

"I don't know! But the punishment comes. Life has a pattern you've got to respect, you know."

As he was being punished now, no doubt, for not having wanted the child... Now he valued the child: he'd felt its spirit, for the first time, through its being snatched away!

He cooked himself a good breakfast, two eggs, bacon and toast, a pot of strong tea, and settled down at the table with the newspaper in front of him. ~~The sunlight had moved across the room, to the dresser where the sturdy Victorian plates glittered.~~

~~There wasn't a sound from the rest of the house.~~ [ It occurred

n.p.

to him that he hadn't touched Pinkie yet. This meant he hadn't touched her for a month. Wasn't that strange? ~~Suppose~~

Well, they were completely out of tune with each other, really. Their sex was fumbled, on the whole, ~~Sometimes it wasn't. But usually~~ ~~it was~~ glorified self-abuse. ~~Why did they get married, then? Because they couldn't bear to part from each other; getting married was the only way of staying together! They'd married, really, because they couldn't bear the thought of the other person marrying anyone else! They had this inexplicable tenderness for each other that was more than friendship and less than love. But there was no natural sex communion: what there was had grown from the tenderness, slowly.~~ His desire was too direct for her: she wanted subtle and intricate approaches; even cruelty would have thrilled her more.

~~They approached each other from opposite poles. She needed to be beyond herself for her passions to rise and, thus, beyond him. Everything had to be enhanced.~~ She closed her eyes and only got excited when his touch seemed anonymous to her; when she could forget him as he *really* ~~was at other times.~~ And he, wrecking his chances, obtruded himself, gazing at her and talking.) ~~She could only keep the flame of her sex alive in dimness.~~ The dim and shadowy excited her; but he was frightened!

But once - at Stratford on Avon - he could remember with ~~pleasure~~ <sup>fascination.</sup> *J. Tals* They'd gone up from Reading to see 'The Tempest' and stayed the night at a small, cosy inn near the river. The spirit of the room was favourable to them, perhaps, with its bright curtains and tiny mullioned windows; it might have been the previous occupants - a lingering <sup>scent</sup> ~~voice~~ of good lust. Anyway, it was the first time they really abandoned themselves to each other; her breasts glistened with his kisses in the darkness, her nipples protruded,

never really got down to anything, but afterwards he felt the loss of his company.

One evening Dick happened to ask if they'd had any servants in Basrah. There were the four of them, with Glenning, in the kitchen upstairs. And Pinkie answered in her extravagant vein, laughing, her lips moist.

"servants?" she cried. "Good, God, yes! We had three, old cock, and a retainer thrown in who lived at the bottom of the garden!"

Glenning appreciated this, chuckling. But a certain pallor came over Dick's face; or perhaps it was only that he pursed his lips. He often seemed to recoil slightly when she was in an extravagant mood or talked in a resounding and patrician way like her father. Servants, as it turned out, were a sore subject with Dick. Hanni told Pinkie later that he refused even to have a char in, because it offended his principle that servicing of any kind was wrong.

In fact, they'd had three servants in Basrah --- Bertha, a girl of nineteen or twenty, Kath'm, his boy, and Abu Kath'm who did the washing at the back and hardly entered the house. And it was odd to hear Pinkie talk like this because servants actually frightened her. Bertha was supposed to be her personal maid as well as the cook but Pinkie did nearly all the cooking and gave her long hours off-duty. Bertha was an Assyrian, like Hanni, and insisted on being treated like a lady.

"I can't bear servants hanging round me!" Pinkie would say.

She would smile at the girl too much, wanting to disown any memsahib attitudes Bertha might attribute to her. Of course, Bertha only assumed that Pinkie was a fake memsahib, afraid to assert herself, and she

pedestrians. The doctors, lawyers and government officials formed an impenetrable sink of corruption. There was also a host of small, neglected men with revolvers in their belts who were said to be in the pay of Russia and were prepared for a communist revolution, which would come about during one of the annual student riots. And the students read Das Kapital under their desk-lids. Then, people said, a communist sink of corruption would replace the present one!

He'd had experience of two riots. After the first one, when Mohammed rescued him from the Mesopotamia Hotel, he framed his letter to Copthall Avenue asking for a change of post: what the devil was he doing here getting mixed up in somebody else's quarrels, he asked himself, and being identified with attitudes he'd never had? He was furious! But then the evening came and he walked with Mohammed down to the river as always, now that the rioting had stopped, and they gazed across at the glittering minarets on the other side while oars plunged in and out of the dark water below them in a regular rhythm, patient and unconscious, and he was drawn back like someone drugged, lulled and delighted, beyond argument or reasoning. The slow, cool wind drove up the river, dispersing the foul day-smells. They went home and cooked a huge musguf, that tasted like cod, in the garden, propped it up against sticks, and after the meal they sat clinking beads together in the sitting-room, with the fire dying and the rush mat making a hissing noise under their feet whenever they moved. In the morning he told himself that the necessity of his Basrah-experience - for his own development - purified and justified his stay.

Quite suddenly, in the grounds of Hampton Court one afternoon, after they and the Pollockes had <sup>eaten</sup> ~~had lunch~~ together, he turned to Pinkie

problem of definition, underneath all the other problems. It wasn't only that this was a difficult world but that he had first to decide on what he was to take as 'the world'.

His thoughts were vague like the water and he reserved them for another time, hoping he would be able to catch their vague flavour again.

He went to the office quite often these days and had several chats with Dick there. But they were still not at ease with each other. Dick was so watchful and alert. 'Does he want to get back to his work?' Granville always asked himself as he stood by Dick's desk. Was he ashamed of having a visitor outside the strict office-schedule, in case a director walked in? Dick covered his nervousness with a bland style and genial glance, keeping his movements as cool and slow as he could; he seemed morbidly aware of the immediate situation --- the exact time, the work that lay on his desk waiting to be finished, the impatience or otherwise of his secretary on the other side of the door. He seemed unable to take flight - from himself. So no real talk was possible.

## CHAPTER 7.

One Saturday Granville woke up slowly and realised she wasn't there. At first, as he roused himself, he had the usual drugged sense of being melted in with her, without touch or real physical sensation of any kind, then he began to realise that his arm was lying on the bed itself, not on her hip. He moved it, to discover whether it was an illusion, ~~then he shifted it further across the bed to find out if she'd only altered her position.~~ But she was gone. He was aware that the phone-bell had rung /cap and at once he was wide awake. She'd got out of bed hurriedly to answer it; he didn't remember her getting out as a real event but as something that had taken place inside his own body, a change of feeling. He felt mortally

X

## CHAPTER 13.

~~It suddenly occurred to him that~~ this inspection of his office was unusual. He was frightened. ~~Why had it taken place?~~ Did it <sup>usually</sup> happen <sup>because he</sup> ~~when someone~~ was on leave? He asked Dick and he didn't know. /cap

~~If it was true that he was going to get the Beirut office~~ it seemed funny that Tomlinson, ~~from the Beirut office~~ <sup>from the Beirut office</sup> ~~should to be displaced,~~ should be allowed to <sup>do</sup> inspect <sup>the</sup> ~~his~~ <sup>ing.</sup> ~~Or perhaps Tomlinson was being sent to a different theatre of operations altogether?~~ ~~But he'd been in the Middle East ever since the war and was quite an authority. It seemed unlikely.~~ Or perhaps they were thinking of sending him to Basrah, as an exchange with Granville. /cap

~~But he couldn't imagine Tomlinson tolerating that -- it would be a severe reduction of rank.~~ he'd met <sup>Tomlinson</sup> ~~him~~ once or twice and he seemed <sup>strikingly</sup> ~~capable, strong person,~~ tall, spectacled, rather brisk and sharp. Also he had an Arab wife, from Cairo --- not a Christian Arab, either; it helped matters with some of the sheikhs. /cap

He thought of writing to Mohammed about it and asking him what Tomlinson had said. What files had he looked at? Did he have the proper authority? But it occurred to him that he didn't <sup>the</sup> ~~need~~ authority, since the Beirut office looked after the whole of the Middle East and it was only Tomlinson's kindness and tact that had allowed him to assume otherwise. He was troubled. Perhaps they knew --- at the London office -- /dital

consciousness of its effect on others --- its importance as a counter in public relations.

~~His mother came to the phone and answered in a soft voice, touched~~  
with enquiry, as if from a great distance. The enquiry was slightly worried. "Who's that?"

"It's Philip!"

"Philip? Well, s'help me God!" Her voice was animated at once, and as always she said 's'help-me-Gord', in one word. "When did you get back?"

"Oh, some time ago --- God knows what I've been doing ever since -- it feels like a few minutes!"

"I wondered when you were going to phone! I said to dad this afternoon, I said, he must be home now! Well, s'help me God!- Talk of the devil, eh? Well, how've you been keeping?"

"Oh, all right! How are things with you?"

"Well, dad's had a bit of a cold but apart from that things haven't been too bad." She always had a superstitious reserve against saying things had gone very well: he imagined her at the other end, plump and slightly flushed in her cheeks, with eyes a little pinched with worry. Her voice was always soft and passive-sounding over the phone, and she seemed to be gazing at things from a safe vantage-point, coolly and remotely, in a place where she wasn't likely to be noticed, and with a certain sadness, as if an enormous pageant was passing her by.

"Is dad still getting out in the garden?"

"Oh, yes, trust him!" She paused a moment, waiting for him to speak. There was always this effort at first, to reach the other world. The language was so different. Then slowly he would begin to feel at

~~When they said goodbye~~ As he walked away from the phone he had a sudden warm, tingling image of the Abbott's Road school on Saturday evenings, at the Socials. He could remember the tall jugs of lemonade on the teacher's desk, and the rows of ham sandwiches. He used to swing on the bars in the dark cloakroom while the dance was going on, or creep into the top classroom where his own desk was, silent and dark, and strange white signs on the blackboard, and maps and rows of untenanted desks, and windows that pulled down with a cord and made a clang. When they got home, about eleven, his mother would unwrap some sausages and these would sizzle with tomatoes in the scullery for the next half-hour, while his father put his slippers on and the cloth was laid, and his mother totted up the takings for the evening in her catering book. He remembered his shudders of elation on Saturday afternoons when they were sitting in the cinema at Tatlin Broadway --- when he thought to himself, "It's Social night tonight!", in the darkness. How extraordinary those shudders were, in childhood; then they died out!

He felt clean and disburdened, and thoughts were no longer crossing and fighting in his head. He went upstairs and made himself a cup of tea, contented, gazing before him.

Once his mother had told him that Pinkie reminded her of Aunt May, in the lavish, golden style she had, in her slapdash generosity. There was something in their voices, too, that was similar --- not the tone exactly, but a richness that couldn't be described, as if it came from past generations, like a song with a great ancient depth in it; they had sing-song voices, floating up and down, far beyond people.

~~Mr. Creed was a spy for the British.~~ 'I thank God you do not come back. It is too safe.' He meant 'unsafe'; this was a peculiar error he always made, omitting negative prefixes. ~~He said that at the trials of the rebel officers in Rubath the defense lawyer had been in the pay of the public prosecutor, and that they were both lovers of Mr. Creed.~~ ~~The last time Mohammed was in Rubath he lost two months at poker;~~ He always measured money by his monthly wage, at least when he talked to Granville, calling thirty pounds 'one month', sixty pounds 'two month' and so forth. Icap ~~ended.~~ "My dear," he ~~would say,~~ "I think I spend one month on one outsider this afternoon. I have one good tip!"

~~There were fluent attacks on the government at meetings held in London. One of the labour party leaders asked what had happened to the plans set forth by the so-called Home Office in Rubath five years ago --- plans for the building of at least fifteen schools and another hospital; for the establishment of a doctor in every village that had a population of over five hundred people, and the irrigation of large areas of the desert to relieve the appalling high disease and mortality rate in the rural districts. What had happened to the money set aside for this purpose from the vast oil profits made by the sheikh? He had evidence that nothing whatsoever had been done! It was little wonder, he said, that some army officers were after the sheikh's blood! Were the British government prepared not simply to stand by and watch it but actively condone it, and to support with arms the murder of men whose only crime had been a sense of social justice such as was accepted everywhere in Europe as elementary and unchallengeable? Was Britain going back instead of forward? And in whose name? In the name of the British people, who had not less than a hundred years before fought for all these rights that~~

X

~~Rubath was now claiming, and won them? What mandate had the British government for its conduct?~~

~~Dick showed him this speech, but Granville shrugged it off. The tone annoyed him. It was the usual sick indignation you read nowadays. He stuck to his guns, in the kitchen arguments, flowering silently. Ginger asked him why he took such a pukka sahib attitude. He felt lonely and misunderstood: his skin prickled as if he was under imminent physical attack, and he couldn't look at the others calmly when politics came up. He kept repeating that it wasn't a matter of morals at all; it was just a matter of one group fighting another. But morality did sometimes come in. The police fired on children one day.~~

In nearly all the kitchen-discussions England was in the wrong. And he took this for granted --- it did seem natural that England should always be in the wrong. 'England' meant different things at different times --- sometimes it meant bad weather, at others war-time restrictions which were still lingering on, sometimes bad colonial policies, at others stiffness of character. It was a static descriptive term, pejorative, automatically so, as if everybody would naturally understand the inference, 'England'. He <sup>was</sup> ~~so~~ so used to it that when Linger-Longer and Ginger talked like this in the crisis he found it natural. But what was going to happen if England was frittered away like this all the time? What would happen to their little group in the kitchen, and the language they talked? ~~It was almost like a change of consciousness in him. He was~~ ~~and at himself, with puzzlement and shame, at his new position. One~~ ~~didn't defend England. Defend something insignificant? The inference~~ ~~was that she could withstand endless criticism. But how long could that~~ ~~go on for?~~ How much frittering away would <sup>England</sup> ~~she~~ be able to bear, in her

From P. 413

[Pip bought a bottle of food wine & asked Dick around: for more wine of the Marguerite, Hanni]

417. X

like me. And I thought I'd get a real explanation out of you."

"It's something I haven't made up my mind about."

"Well, that's how I like you, old sport, so stay where you are!"

But this was exactly what Granville didn't intend to do.

What was it to be then, --- the 'flame' in people, which he recognised in Abu Kath'm, or decent lives? He had to say decent lives! How could he wish anything else on people? And why should the two be incompatible? But he felt they were; the plans and schemes would be at the expense of the 'flame'; and here he was back at the beginning! If the price to be paid for good lives was death in the end --- a kind of civic collapse --- what was the good of it? He couldn't resolve the matter! He realised how far he looked on the middle class as a total historical mistake; he wrote them off; he could see no need for this historical mistake, much less good! The middle-class was just a negative development in his eyes: the factories had come, people had been herded into them, smoke had filled the air, life was violated and made ugly! But how could an historical mistake have lasted two centuries? How was it possible for history suddenly to be twisted out of its path and remain distorted ever since? How could he put himself in opposition to history? Surely that was romantic? to simply turn his back? What were his ideas? What did distinguish him from a romantic? He couldn't tell himself! He didn't know what this experience was that men had needed. There lay his next real task of thought.

Hanni dropped in later and an argument developed between her and Dick. First she looked at the empty wine-bottle and, ~~recognising a real~~ <sup>saying the</sup> chateau-label, murmured, "What a mean bastard you are, Dick! I thought you said we'd got to cut down on spending?" She lifted the bottle up

## CHAPTER 18.

<sup>had</sup>  
 He ~~got~~ got into the habit of reading the morning paper over breakfast more or less column by column. It was an hypnotic activity he ~~had~~ had never known before. ~~he left his books unread, and never went to the~~  
~~table. The newspaper was lying there when he got up, on the door-mat~~  
~~with some ridiculous headline, and he ran down to get it automatically;~~  
~~at the breakfast-table he opened it with his left hand, keeping the right~~  
~~for his cup of tea, which he could now pick up and replace in the saucer,~~  
~~after long practice, without glancing at it.~~ He always turned to the  
 middle pages first, where the gossip-column was. It gave him the sense  
 of an inner circle of glittering <sup>London</sup> activity from which he was cut off and  
 which was going on all the time, spreading a glow over his small life.  
 This circle involved more or less the same people day by day, but it  
 wasn't 'society' in the fashionable sense. ~~It was questionable whether~~  
~~that ever existed.~~ It was a ~~kind of~~ special gossip-column society, and  
~~even~~ though it might be imaginary, it <sup>was</sup> ~~seemed~~ acceptable in the breakfast-  
 hour, in a half-dream; a little sickly and squalid, but compulsive. And  
~~also~~ it was a relief from the dry, tyrannical hold of the other pages,  
 where robberies, dirty civic crimes, yacht-races and political manoeuvres  
 were <sup>dealt with in</sup> ~~talked about, and the eye was drawn against its will by~~ a few quick  
<sup>which seemed proud of showing no heart or the slightest serious concern,</sup>  
~~phases that seemed to touch the heart and then pulled quickly away again.~~  
~~He had the impression that~~ the gossip-column was <sup>actually an intimate</sup> ~~report of people's doings.~~ <sup>It was like reading a letter someone had</sup>

quiet cohesion of the body, by virtue of its withdrawal from the world; <sup>Pip</sup> Granville had never seen him in repose before, not quite like this. He only remembered him ~~in drawing-room~~, smiling and shaking hands, gazing at everyone with eyes that seemed incapable of sharpness. And now Grysham had an effect on the trees round him: he made them seem part of a magnificent park ~~still~~ closed to the public. Granville thought of the gardens of Versailles. Partly it was Grysham's corduroy jacket, which at first sight looked velvet. →

~~They walked towards each other quickly  
"What a wonderful surprise! I'd no idea you were back, Pip!"  
They shook hands, smiling at each other, and Granville replied,  
"Yes, about two months ago."~~

~~Grysham was so effusive that he felt ashamed of the weakness of his own feelings: he only felt a mild affection, also excitement, perhaps, at being with one of the Gryshams again: they all had such a glow and style! Though Deryk and his mother, Beatrice, were looked on as outposts of the family: too tidy and conscious of rank! That was because Beatrice was a 'trade' --- she was more Grysham than the Gryshams, the family said: --- She was a flashing, wild, haughty woman: --- but also careful underneath her style: --- a snob from top to toe.~~

~~In Grysham's gaze now there was mingled admiration, curiosity and a subtle glittering look of being complimented by Granville's presence.~~

~~"Isn't it lovely?" Granville said, nodding towards where the sunlight flickered on the water, through the leaves.~~

~~"Isn't it?" --- "I couldn't bear any more!" --- "You look awfully well," Grysham added, giving him a side glance. --- "How's Bester?"~~

~~"He's fainter!"~~

The name 'Pinkie' was unknown to Deryk; he and his mother  
 always said Hester. Granville tried to think of something more to say  
 but couldn't; and they continued along the path; he added that Hester  
 had got nice and sunburned in the Middle East, but stopped there. He  
 felt quite tongue-tied but yet easy as well: there was something so  
 foreign to him in Grysham, he himself had been away so long and in such  
 a different world, that he felt a fascinated curiosity towards the other  
 man, ~~as if he himself was cancelled out and calmly listening to Deryk's~~  
 being, that took shape at his side, helped by his silence; two years ago  
 he would have forced the conversation along, believing that this was  
 expected of him; he'd always been nervous with Deryk's mother Beatrice;  
 he'd always felt too fired and stimulated socially, because of her gushing  
~~charm, for any drowsy, inquisitive calm to be possible.~~ It was like  
 being drawn into a strange, vivid country now, where he only had to watch  
 and listen; he was no longer involved; what <sup>Aunt</sup> Beatrice or Deryk thought  
 of him didn't matter ~~so much~~ <sup>now</sup>; they had ~~less~~ <sup>no</sup> power to hurt <sup>the</sup> their exclusion  
~~of him, if that had ever been in their minds, seemed not to concern him,~~  
~~but to be about an idea of him from which he in himself was immune; he~~  
~~hadn't heard the word 'background' for two years or more! He was thus~~  
~~less in awe of Deryk.~~ A glow had come into his own life which he held  
 intact; he'd tasted friendship; he deliberately remembered Mohammed as  
<sup>he</sup> ~~they~~ walked along, as a protective device. He clung to the memory of  
 Basrah! He felt nervous apprehension threaten to mount in him for a  
 moment, like a devil inside him which his confidence had tempted to come  
~~out,~~ <sup>But it did</sup> he'd always felt feathers in the belly before seeing Beatrice,  
~~because of her terrific social requirements of wit and constant talk,~~  
~~which he'd always found, once he'd steeled himself to them, that he~~

enjoyed fulfilling; but now he steeled himself the opposite way, to calm; with nothing to say he said nothing! And Deryk seemed to sense something new in him; his tone was more confidential than Granville could remember it, with less deliberate charm and courtesy; they were on an equal footing.

→ Granville <sup>he</sup> was aware that this <sup>new</sup> calm he had, ~~which he knew wouldn't last long~~, might be his first glimpse of maturity, ~~as he would have to find it in the world he'd graduated to~~; it had something to do with the defeat of pride in himself; he would have to learn how not to care what people thought of him; then he would be able to rest, and watch and listen; he would allow his own self to reside elsewhere, intact; and that would take much construction --- perhaps years more.

The carriage of Deryk's head <sup>as he passed</sup> was like a sea-horse's, uplifted, his eyes half-closed in a sleepy, pale surveillance, his nose long and ~~also~~ pale, seeming to overhang his lips. <sup>Pip</sup> He could remember <sup>when</sup> the first moment Deryk ~~had~~ opened the door of the ~~top-floor-flat~~ to him, a few weeks after he and Pinkie were married; he remembered the sense of being incorporated into some grand and blazing activity, which never ~~quite~~ came about however; it was in Deryk's delighted smile as he stretched out his hand --- to his 'favourite' cousin's husband --- with, "How very nice to meet you! Do come in!"

"What's the work like out there?" Deryk asked him.

"Oh <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-- it's fascinating!"

He made the words up, and smiled. And now a return-question was required of him: "How's the school?" Deryk worked in a school where his mother had a money-interest.

"Oh! I'm always thinking of giving it up --- travelling! But ---!"

Granville glanced at Deryk quickly --- suppose he had failed to

understand Deryk? --- suppose they had equal desires, only on two sides of an immense gulf planted by history?

"Do you want to travel?" he asked quickly.

"Yes, I'd love to!"

"Why don't you come out to the Middle East?"

"I've always dreamed about it --- but, you know, Beatrice really couldn't get on without me --- at the school for one thing!"

"Why don't you try it? You could send the money home!"

"I know!" Then a charming smile, which seemed to make it all make-believe --- everything he'd been saying.

"You could easily find some work out there!" Granville went on, persisting deliberately.

And Deryk's smile faded a little. The little formula of charm had been disturbed. "Yes!"

"Why don't you do it?" He persisted further, forcing himself to it with a hard directness while --- absurd! --- beginning to quiver ever so slightly inside, with apprehension --- from breaking the little formula that the other man insisted on with all his soft, casual being like a pale weight in the sunlight.

"Perhaps I will one day," Deryk replied. That was a little patronising. And the smile had almost quite faded. There was even ~~the slightest edge of --- nastiness? But no --- perhaps a delicate sour distaste.~~

~~Slowly the old clouds, which he'd all but forgotten, gathered in Granville again. He began to remember the past.~~ <sup>Partly it was</sup> <sup>lay in / t. c.</sup>  
~~Deryk's accent, which was like a deliberate attempt not to speak the language of ordinary men, with 'rarely' for 'really' and a painful~~ <sup>which said</sup> <sup>↑</sup> <sup>J. Paul</sup>

*l*

*it was*  
 'ee-ow' for 'oh'; an accent that seemed to say, 'I was paid for!'  
~~Granville fought against it, reminding himself of Basrah and trying to~~  
~~keep the idea of Deryk as someone foreign to him, and also mysterious.~~  
~~Partly he succeeded as they walked along together under the trees with~~  
~~the children's voices behind them. But~~ the memories became more and *1 cap*  
 more detailed --- of a slight rudeness here, of a sudden harsh sneering  
 sentence from <sup>'Aunt'</sup> Beatrice, ~~the lady~~, a look of horror on her face when he  
 mentioned his <sup>own</sup> mother casually in a conversation --- the horror ~~really had~~  
 made her face seem to fall into her chin! Absurd, dead, historical, *u.p.*  
 but here they were coming up like steam from Deryk's <sup>parting figure.</sup> ~~presence at his side!~~  
~~was he slowly recapturing that old~~ <sup>illusive</sup> sense of being <sup>subtly</sup> favoured by Deryk --- *19 Not*  
 was that the web he and Beatrice weaved on their visitors, was that the *12 late*  
 costly invisible article they were still trying to sell in a world which  
 had ~~flung them off as far as authority was concerned fifty years ago~~ <sup>no market for it</sup>

Behind them was the inner citadel of power, and they held the  
 keys --- that was the idea you were supposed to get. But you were never  
 let in. So the dream was always to hover before you. →

~~Deryk had his pale hands behind his back, idly clasped together.~~  
~~They came out into an opening where a hill rose steeply, <sup>upward</sup> smooth and~~ *cap*  
~~green, and the warmth of the sun had collected there, in the hollow, full~~  
~~of hot, dusty scents. He seemed <sup>almost</sup> like other men --- lost in thought,~~  
 kicking slightly at the gravel with his foot, ~~but~~ as if he were off-duty in  
 some way: his fragility wasn't that of the drawing room for the moment,  
 but more childish --- he might be a child kicking at the gravel, rather  
 bored. His eyes had a childish, dreamy quality, too, without anything  
 self-protective in their look. His jacket was a deep wine-colour, and  
 his grey trousers had lost their crease; he was untidy but yet he had an

air of clean, fastidious detachment. His shoulders were bowed wearily. <sup>Pip</sup> Granville had an impression of a child alone in his own park, pouting a little, sad and frightfully lonely, wondering what had gone wrong, because this was a public park and all the world roared close by. Suddenly their eyes met and Deryk's gaze changed at once, the dimness left his eyes like something falling into the sea, a shadow, replaced with a look of gentle solicitude -- yes, was Granville about to ask a question?

~~Granville's heart was moved at once. He had the sensation that there was a special recognition in Deryk's eyes at that moment, perhaps because they were in -- well, the same family! He suddenly blamed himself for the dark thoughts he'd just had, and for the absence in his life of this light courtesy!~~ [ When Deryk shook hands with someone his expression was extraordinarily gentle and delighted, and humbly solicitous. His whole body seemed made for courtesy, and one couldn't imagine that he had a dark thought, much less a censorious one. His eyes filled with light as if the social command had become the natural one for him. ~~He disclaimed self when he talked to people, too -- it was all "How wonderful!" and "No, really?" and "How very nice for you!" And when he did bring in his own life he made it seem like a game, something you didn't bother about. He smoothed the path all the time, nodding and smiling, calling the other person on.~~ But --- it didn't go all the way through! You were left with the feeling that he and Beatrice would tear you to peices as soon as your back was turned.

He remembered their house ~~so well~~ --- the hushed anteroom of the citadel of power, --- the thick carpets, the white, curving bannisters, the dim and heavily curtained drawing room that <sup>of grand its bugs</sup> ~~seemed to~~ promise everything,

of civilization; ~~there was~~  
~~the dead-white walls because that was the only colour you could furnish~~  
 to the great porcelain bowl from Aldercote that <sup>shining</sup> shone from one of the  
 tables; the <sup>recess</sup> deep armchairs <sup>into which</sup> where you sank, <sup>and</sup> down the striped chintz  
 everywhere. ~~then~~ <sup>rose</sup> Beatrice rising from an armchair as you came in with a  
 mighty rustle and sweep, ~~always~~ <sup>down</sup> in a long, flowing gown that shone and  
 glittered in the dim light. Yet she was robust as well, with thick arms  
 and a determined chin. Her eyes sparkled at you, gleeful and challenging,  
 black, with a tiny light of irony in them. Her dress was ~~always~~ cut low,  
 and the lights were arranged to take twenty years off her age, which they  
 did, giving her skin a marvellous, soft, healthy glow, with nothing  
 pinched or thwarted. She had the habit of giving you an admiring <sup>nod</sup> ~~not~~  
 every now and then, ~~even if she wasn't talking to you,~~ together with a  
~~wide~~ smile that had something roguish in it, making her teeth shine.  
 She had ~~blonde~~, unruly hair and together with her sharp nose it gave her  
 an eagle-look, especially as she had the habit of darting her head from  
 side to side as she switched her gaze. Her lips were full and open,  
 yet gripped firmly in <sup>e</sup> sensual will, with something flirtatious and  
 conniving in them.

<sup>she</sup> ~~Beatrice~~ loved rank ravenously, almost with an innocent passion.  
 Knowing that somebody was a lord or higher (lower she didn't go) made  
 them ~~seem extraordinarily~~ beautiful to her, and she really did look at  
 them with sexually admiring eyes, ~~even if they were a lady or a duchess.~~  
 When she was with Pinkie's uncle, Maimbury, she laughed and threw back  
 her head, and all her wit ~~came out~~ she would flash <sup>ed</sup> him glances, and  
 dim lights <sup>were</sup> ~~seemed~~ unnecessary then, ~~because~~ her skin vibrated naturally  
 with youth. By the same token she hated the absence of rank in people.  
~~She couldn't respect them.~~ But, more than that, she couldn't forgive

*She liked Granville but couldn't  
forgive him.*

them. She simply was unable to. There was no dream there for her

She had a wonderful way of talking about the family. Did Pinkie know that one of her cousins was marrying the marquis of Averdale next year? Such a clever, charming girl! And had Philip been introduced to the Wynters girl? That must be arranged! They'd adore each other --- she knew that! And she would look across at Deryk and say, "Don't you think so, darling?" and he would answer, "Yes, mummy!" It never was arranged. But the promise was intoxicating. Beyond Beatrice you always saw a country mansion with tall lighted windows peeping through the cedar trees. Then it would be, "Your grandfather adored you when you were small," to Pinkie, smiling brilliantly. "Clive took your grandmother down to Aldercote that summer, do you remember, for the last time, she died the same year Pamela was born --- I always remember Pamela in her baptism clothes, she made such a lovely baby!" Or, "That was before your father sold everything up, when we always went down to Beeches for July and August, do you remember, darling?" And so the web was spun, closer and closer with every visit.

"Hester must be looking well after all that sun!" Deryk said.

"Oh, yes!"

"Isn't it rather too hot sometimes?"

"Well," Granville replied, "you can always go for a dip in the swimming pool --- you don't dream of working after eleven in the morning!"

"Oh! Is that a company pool or ---?"

"Well, it's a kind of club run for the oil people mostly, and we've got membership cards." He was just about to add that they'd lost their membership cards when he cut himself short, knowing too well the hot feeling of regret that might result if he let his words rush on

X

Retype all

CHAPTER 21.

It had started by accident, just before the eclipse, when he and Pinkie wandered out on to the porch and found Abu Kath'm <sup>his Rouseby's mother,</sup> ~~there~~ <sup>She</sup> ~~Abu Kath'm~~ had a round, very flat face with still, black eyes set wide apart, her mouth a thick, straight, yellowish-crimson line.

~~There were henna marks on her brow and chin, to ward off the evil eye,~~  
~~and~~ a hem of her black abba was usually drawn up over her nose, so that her eyes shone blackly in the slit. She stood hardly higher than his elbow and walked in a round, fussy way, but always in perfect silence, her back straight and her head up, going forward softly on her toes, hardly disturbing the sand, her long skirt making a brief circular motion backwards and forwards.

~~There was something so fussy about her, but she was a bit. She would make ceremonious little bows when she brought the washing over, and once she tried to kiss his feet. But it didn't impair her dignity. She had a dignity that was like a presence behind her, implied by her gestures and ingratiating little nods and~~

~~and she would be squatting at the entrance of her mud hut mending clothes or picking bugs out of the hair of one of her grandchildren. Sometimes she would look up quickly as if she'd heard something and gaze before her, narrowing her eyes a little so that they shone; and no matter where she looked there always seemed to be the vast desert in front of her.~~

cap

~~special silence always seemed to hang round her hut, however much she shouted at the children or fussed about. Her husband came only rarely, on an old bicycle which he leaned against one of the banana trees. He had the same silence and the same distance in his eyes. It didn't matter how many awkward or quick gestures they made; the stillness was always there. And they weren't aware of each other's proximity. They went close together and sometimes spoke loudly into each other's faces. But there was always the same distant stare in their eyes, surpassing people.~~

The newspapers had been talking for days about the coming eclipse. And the time of total obsuration was predicted to the minute. It was to be a few minutes after three, in the afternoon.

Outside, a ~~light~~ wind stirred the sand, like before a dust-storm. The city lay in a great hush. Only this slight breeze touched the sand on the pathway outside and sent it whirling up in thin yellow clouds among the palm-leaves. Usually they could hear children playing near by, or cars in the distance. But today there wasn't a sound.

5 The sun ~~still~~ shone, ~~but~~ more and more dimly, as if a high mist obscured it. There was something vaguely disturbing in the air. Perhaps it was only the silence.)

The palm-leaves were still like iron, and the colours of the garden were becoming more lurid as all brightness left the sky. ~~He didn't want to come outside. They'd just finished lunch and he'd got up and walked to the window.~~ Everything ~~had~~ seemed to be waiting. The sandy undulations of the waste area outside ~~had~~ looked hard like flint, each mound getting more and more fixed, a polished yellow crust. ~~When he'd got a headache and added, "Let's go outside!" he seemed ~~to go outside, but he nodded. And they walked out on to~~~~

f

~~the porch overlooking the garden, where everything now lay deep and~~  
~~threatening silence.~~ The rugged, knarled barks of the banana trees, the  
~~parched~~ grass and the yellow mud-hut with the endless shimmering desert  
 beyond, grew more and more contrasted, ~~fixed and flat~~, as if,  
 though more distinct from each other than before, the ~~objects~~ were ~~now~~  
 part of the same hard substance, ~~and had drawn together~~ in a new,  
 unwholesome intimacy. There was no wind now, not even a breeze. ~~A~~

~~absolute stillness held everything. Not a leaf or bough moved. The~~  
~~rooms of the house were very dark now. Inside and outside seemed to be~~  
~~drawing into one, and the plants and the trees had the dead immobility~~  
~~of furniture. And the air felt like that in a room.~~

~~Their shoes made a sharp rustling noise on the tiles, and this was~~  
~~covered up at once by the silence. Pinkie was frowning, her eyes screwed~~  
~~up in a tired way. He strolled towards the parapet and looked up at the~~  
~~sky. The sun was crescent-shaped now, almost finished. Why were there~~  
~~no sounds from the city? Pinkie moved to his side and he heard her~~  
~~breathing quite distinctly. The banana trees were black with shadow,~~  
~~their massive trunks like monuments of iron. The crescent, hardly more~~  
~~than a brilliantly curved line, was growing smaller and smaller.~~

~~He became aware of a dark movement below in the garden and looked~~  
~~down quickly. He'd forgotten Abu Kath'im was standing there, so much~~  
~~part of the garden had she become. Her black abba was drawn up close to~~

Abu Kath'im  
~~her eyes said~~ he heard ~~her~~ say the greeting Allah bil khair to him under  
 the cloth. He nodded to her. She moved nearer them with her soft,

circular motion. ~~Her bare feet made the slightest thudding on the earth.~~  
~~Then she stood still under the parapet, gazing up at them, and he noticed~~  
 that her eyes were troubled, blacker than usual, more fiery and pointed.

~~She made a long movement of her arm under her cloak and nodded with an urgent expression towards the house; she wanted them to go back inside! Like the colours of the garden the colours of her face had become more vivid under the strange sky. The henna marks on her brow were a more glaring reddish-brown, and the skin round her eyes was luminously yellow. Neither he nor Pinkie moved, only watched her. She nodded towards the house again, her eyes screwed up earnestly. She was standing perfectly still. Everything in the garden seemed immovable, the folds of her cloak like folds of iron. Her sallow, slightly sweating skin could have been wax. The sun was almost gone.~~

~~Then she said something, speaking very quickly under the cloth in a guttural, hoarse whisper. It hardly touched the silence, and he wasn't aware of her, actually ceasing to speak, only of the silence having asserted itself again. The sound was secretive and rasping, from an inhuman depth. It had a certain dryness, like twigs breaking. The voice seemed not her own. Her eyes, screwed up with an urgent concentration, seemed the only human thing in her, as if they were trying to send a message of help across the silence, to corroborate the voice that had come from under her cloth.~~

~~He didn't catch any of the words. He raised his eyebrows, to indicate he hadn't understood, but she took this for surprise at what she'd said, and nodded quickly again. Then she repeated the remark, and this time he managed to catch a few of the words. She was saying something about the sun being Allah. ~~Then, "Allah is angry with men."~~ ~~And this was followed by a sentence, something like,~~ <sup>And,</sup> ~~"He is covering his eyes from men."~~ "He is covering his sight from men in shame for them!" She repeated the quick, stabbing word for 'shame', that was like a whip of~~

punishment itself --- aib, two syllables rushed breathlessly together.

~~When she said "Allah" she made the slightest backward movement~~  
of her head towards the sky. It was hardly enough to be noticed, only a faint swaying motion, with a look of gleaming confidence in her eyes. But there was such an unhesitating intimacy in it that he glanced up at the sun at once, almost expecting to see evidence of what she said. She stood absolutely still, fixed in the garden like the trees. Her eyes were unblinking, staring at him with pin-points of shrewd light. The sun was quite gone now. Over everything there was this uncanny dusk! He heard her repeat the words, "Allah is angry", and she drew the abba closer around her shoulders.

He glanced sideways at Pinkie and saw that she too was looking up at the sky. For a moment it was quite believable that Allah was there, showing his anger!

"How long does it last?" Pinkie asked in a murmur.

He shrugged. No birds were singing. He noticed it for the first time. She strolled to the parapet and leaned forward on it, staring into the bushes under the banana trees. And he yawned.

"I think it's only a few seconds," he replied.

"When was the last eclipse?"

"I don't know --- years ago".

He didn't want to speak at all. It felt out of place. His voice sounded jagged and unharmonious.

"She doesn't like us being out here," Pinkie said softly, watching Abu Kath'm again.

"No."

But by now the sun was beginning to come back and the weather

revive. The fear seemed to have left Abu Kath'm's face. She had a softer look, and the folds of her skirt were no longer like iron. The skin round her eyes had lost its lurid, shining quality.

*Then it got lighter and you*

~~And she~~ could see the weather had changed just by looking at her.

As the sky cleared, so did her face. *He realised something.* But he ~~and Pinkie had to look up at the sun and see it appearing, to be certain. That was how they knew.~~

~~But Abu Kath'm knew it without the use of her eyes. She was a part of everything else in the garden. Nor did she feel the change in the sun~~

~~She was part of it. She was part of the weather,~~ *as he wanted.* ~~It was still active~~

~~inside her. And just as everything else in the garden began to change its colour, so did she. She was fixed in nature like the trees, whereas~~

*for him* ~~he and Pinkie were looking on all the time, their minds active, far from~~

~~the world round them. The world was 'external' to them. It was 'round' them. They looked at it from a distance.~~

Something of the silence lifted, too. He heard a bird singing alone. There was the faintest breath of wind through the trees. And the light was growing all the time. The desert, stretching far beyond the garden, was bright again, like a huge shimmering sea of yellow. He heard the hushed throbbing of the city again. Why did it come only now? Perhaps the slight wind brought it.

The colours of the garden were drawing out of their sombre, fixed darkness and taking on separate life again. A child shouted in the distance. Pinkie strolled back indoors, yawning.

Abu Kath'm walked away also, back to her hut. The weight and foreboding had lifted from her. She walked in her usual fussy way, her skirt swinging with its curiously soothing and circular motion, Her body turned a little with each step like an element of the air itself.

~~He turned back to the house and for the rest of the day his mind kept wandering to her. Really, she'd shown him the afternoon. Without her he would just have seen an eclipse with his eyes. And he realised for the first time how little part of the world he was.~~

Abu Kath'm talked about the sky with an air of perfect authority, and made him and Pinkie look like children by comparison with herself --- strange, thoughtful, brooding children!

For them the eclipse was an 'event' taking place in a vast, empty zone: the moon moves between the earth and the sun, causing a partial obscuration of the light. There was nothing in this to involve their 'feelings'. It had nothing to do with them. The world was everything 'round' them, as if they were foreigners to it. And this wasn't a philosophy or doctrine on their part. It was a discipline so deep that it had become their way of perceiving things. And only with somebody like Abu Kath'm in front of them did they become at all conscious of this peculiar discipline.

Look at the way he <sup>had seen the eclipse:</sup> ~~thought about things on the porch, quite naturally and without question. Abu Kath'm was 'below' him, under the parapet. There were banana trees 'behind' her. Pinkie was at his 'side'.~~

<sup>have had been</sup> 'Above' them <sup>Abu</sup> all was the 'sky' (a weather zone, so to speak), and the <sup>Kath'm</sup> 'below'; <sup>the eclipse happened at sixteen</sup> 'eclipse' was 'taking place' there, a predicted event. He was 'standing' <sup>minutes past 3</sup>

<sup>on the porch.</sup> It was ~~all~~ like a physicist's survey. But it was the way he perceived things quite naturally. He thought while he perceived; and the two were no longer separable in him. ~~He was apart from the things round him. They were in a kind of mathematical relation to him, 'above', 'below', at the side', 'behind'.~~ The world was like a fixed chart. ~~It was as if a thinker's consciousness had been imprinted on,~~

silence, passively, knowing that things did change in the darkness,  
like the stirring of new roots.

→ ~~He had the~~ <sup>He had night, in bed,</sup>  
~~impression~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~actually breathing~~ <sup>the night, the</sup>  
~~the night, the~~ <sup>source of</sup>  
~~source of~~ <sup>his breath</sup>  
~~his breath~~ <sup>being the</sup>  
~~being the~~ <sup>stillness outside</sup>

He heard the tinkling of the palm-tree by his balcony. ~~It was~~  
~~about the middle of the night now.~~ The breeze made a hushed sound  
outside, touching the window, and he glanced up. ~~Beyond the light of~~  
~~the desk-lamp~~ he could see the window like a square black picture, <sup>framing</sup>  
~~the entire desert beyond the city~~  
~~Though he could see nothing outside he had the same feeling as before,~~  
~~perhaps because of the silence~~ that <sup>R</sup> Everything was unsubstantial like  
dust, a vast shadow, both the room and the night outside. / The room  
looked <sup>f</sup> fixed and yet vague, its individual things drawn into one unity  
by the silence, <sup>just as the garden had in the eclipse.</sup> →

What did Christ die into? he thought. What lay on the other side  
of death? What was that silent order one became aware of in life? There  
was a gap behind Christ! 'What do I mean by God?' The experience was  
missing. But the word 'God' must have sprung from a human experience.  
'Can I break through the obstruction of my own mind and get near to that  
experience?' he asked himself. 'And so come to within a shade of  
believing in God myself?' Hitherto, he'd always regarded 'believing in  
God' with distant awe. How could anybody believe in God? It was  
impossible!

Yet all those centuries of men lay behind, refuting him. What  
did 'God' mean? Hitherto he'd glided over the word. Well, he'd once  
glided over the word 'Christ'. Now let him see if he could do justice  
to 'God', too.

He thought for a long time in the silence. Then it occurred to  
him, 'Consult your own feelings. Don't try to conceive all the time,

X  
 "What a question! Don't you really care?"

"I meant why do you think she shouldn't wander off?"

"Well, for your benefit! I don't know ---!" She gave him an uncanny glance, unable to find her words.

"But if she wandered off," he said, "it would mean she wanted to wander off, and it's no use forcing somebody's life off its path, is it? You can't do it in any case. You'd feel that all you'd got in return was a fraud. You can alter somebody's will, but the will's got to be there."

"Does she want to wander, then?" she asked quietly, again biting her lip.

He shrugged. "It was your phrase."

"Everybody'd like to wander some time, I suppose. But first of all you've got to get a family going, don't you agree?"

"Oh, yes!"

There was a pause, and he gazed out of the window again. He had a sense of giving himself away, just as he would with Dick or Hanni, but it was gone in a moment. She was so different! The subject had already passed out of her. Nothing was harboured in her mind. The trees and grass outside looked clear and fresh. 'How paltry life usually is,' he told himself, 'because of thoughts lurking in people's minds like rats!'

Then they arrived. He was astonished that they'd actually driven about ten miles. It had gone like a few seconds.

"Well, here we are!" she said. Then she called out, "Hester! Children!"

*Chapter 22*  
*Pinkie plowed from Muesham's way he should come for a couple of days. So he did. ~~On a Sunday night,~~*

It was a lovely house, set back from the road, its porch shaded

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by a dark plane-tree. The red brick walls glowed in the last of the sun. There were tall windows, their sills within a foot or two of the ground, so <sup>you</sup> ~~that one~~ could have stepped ~~into~~ into the rooms from the gravel drive. The house spread out wide, two storeys, with pillars at the entrance, and the roof was uneven, grown over with moss, ~~like those of the farms he'd seen on the way.~~

~~Pinkie came out with the children, looking fresh and much happier than when she'd left. She gave him a smacking kiss and laughed. The children were Toby, David and Jane. They looked him over, casually after being introduced, and ran inside again. Jane had a slow, dark gaze, and one could see something of Elizabeth's impulsive warmth in her, held back.~~

~~"Aren't they beasts, my children?" she cried.~~

~~"Perfectly horrible," Pinkie said, gazing up at the sky with loose eyes, blinking against the light. "It's all this modern upbringing, what?"~~

~~The house was apart from the village, which straggled down the road, hidden behind thick trees and bushes. E On the garden side of the house, there stretched a long valley with endless fields and ~~an~~ <sup>u. / o,</sup> ~~arranged~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~furthest~~ ~~distance~~, misty and blueish. It was like seeing everything from the air. This was the valley they'd seen from the car, when she'd pointed. But still it was a surprise, a sudden access of light as one came round the side of the house.~~

Elizabeth made rather a fuss of him, getting him tea and glancing at Pinkie brightly now and then. Pinkie played up to it, ~~allowing~~ ~~him~~ ~~his~~ ~~importance~~. It seemed to give her a thrill, as well. She made the tea, and they drank out of tall nursery mugs, ~~that had once belonged to~~

~~Elizabeth's grandmother~~ Pinkie behaved as if she'd always given him tea in this <sup>homely way;</sup> ~~style~~ for the time being, she seemed to believe it really was so.

~~"How do you like our little study?" she asked him~~

~~"Oh, it's nice, doesn't it?" They laughed.~~

~~"You'll be driving me all the way to the beach in the morning."~~

~~"Oh, good!"~~

Elizabeth showed him Gordon's study: <sup>it</sup> ~~with his collection of books that covered every wall. This was in case he got bored with the "women folk" she said.~~ The room led off the dark hall, long and quiet, with panelled walls ~~visible here and there behind the books,~~ and deep leather armchairs <sup>around the hearth.</sup> ~~It was rather like a club room, with shields on the mantelpiece and a rack for pipes.~~ There was an immense desk ~~under the window at the end of the room, which overlooked the valley.~~ He told Pinkie what a wash-out it made him feel, being a clerk, when he saw all this.

She murmured uncomfortably, ~~not really coming to his aid, "Oh, I don't know,"~~ and turned away. <sup>then</sup> perhaps under the influence of the mellow ~~of the~~ house, ~~she said,~~ "You don't have such a bad life. I wouldn't like to be in the shoes of some of the wives I know, anyway. Living in a sort of backyard with a squallid little husband coming in at six sharp every evening and giving them some little pecks on the cheek!"

~~"Hear, hear!" Elizabeth shouted playfully from the hall.~~

Playfully Pinkie added, "Anyway, you've got style, and that's what counts!" And after another pause: "And you're not a clerk now, you're a branch manager!"

"That sounds worse!" he <sup>said</sup> ~~replied~~ with a laugh.

1/2 ital



That evening, ~~when they were having a drink before dinner,~~  
~~sitting in the big drawing room where there were three tall windows,~~ <sup>they</sup> talked  
 started about the value of confessing <sup>on:</sup> ~~your sins.~~ Elizabeth was a catholic. <sup>cap</sup>  
~~she said,~~ <sup>she said,</sup> "It's such a jolly good service. It's like going to the  
~~and omitted,~~ lavatory!" ~~Then she clipped her hand over her mouth with a laugh, "It's~~  
~~that blasphemous, do you think? What I mean is you have such a special~~  
~~feeling afterwards."~~

"Why, do you have many sins?" <sup>asked her</sup> ~~said~~ Pinkie with a smile.

"Oh, lots! Not grave ones --- but lots of tiny ~~little~~ 'ones!" <sup>ditto</sup>

"I have lots, too," said Pinkie quite seriously. "And grave ones."

~~"Oh, you poor dear!" She turned to Granville, giving him a~~  
~~lively, flashing glance. "Is she awfully wicked, isn't she?"~~  
~~"I suppose she is, rather."~~  
~~"But what sort of wicked?" she asked, looking at Pinkie again.~~  
~~"I mean, do you have mean thoughts and that sort of thing? Surely not?"~~  
~~"Oh, no, I don't mean that sort of wicked."~~  
~~"Well, how, then?"~~  
~~"She means getting drunk and wanting men and that sort of thing,"~~  
~~he said. "She thinks God's only interested in that sort of thing,~~  
~~presumably because she is!"~~  
~~Pinkie chuckled, gazing down at her glass, seeming to feel~~  
~~complimented.~~  
~~"Oh, when I go to confession I think of when I snubbed somebody~~  
~~or was rude to Gordy, and things like that!"~~  
~~"Really, she's!" Pinkie laughed, scolding her a little round. "You~~

~~are a vindictous bitch!"~~

~~"Not a bit of it, they're real sins, those things!"~~

~~"Small hat, old girl, small hat! You wait until you commit a really wopping sin, then you'll know what guilt is!"~~

~~"Do you feel guilt, then?" Elizabeth asked her, intrigued, giving her one of her awed, blinking glances.~~

~~"Yes." She pouted, staring at the floor. "Quite a lot!"~~

~~She looked so solitary compared with Elizabeth, and sat low in the settee, pale, her eyes hesitant while she thought the matter over.~~

~~"Isn't it funny," Elizabeth said in a bright way, "how serious people take themselves! They think their little sins are so important. But nothing's too sinful to tell! That's the whole point of confession -- it makes you see how common and ordinary your sins are!"~~

~~"I suppose it does!" Pinkie said with a smile, a little bippy now, still swiveling her drink round and peering at it against the light, her eyes slightly narrowed.~~

~~There was silence for a time. He could just hear the trees outside, stirring with the breeze.~~

~~"Why," <sup>he said,</sup> Granville asked Pinkie, "what's so grave about <sup>them?</sup> your sins?"~~

He'd just remembered his outing to the zoo with the hair-girl and felt absurdly jubilant about it: he, too, had a sin --- a potential one anyway! And this went to excuse Pinkie's.

She seemed to catch the roguishness in his tone and said, ~~"Oh,"~~ →  
~~nothing unconfessful, anyway -- that's the real sin, don't you think so, being dreary?"~~

~~"Yes!" They flashed a smile at each other, unsteady because of the drink, while strangers exulted with themselves.~~



→ "What about <sup>yours?"</sup> ~~your sins?~~" she asked while Elizabeth ~~stuffed them in~~  
~~scattered away~~ It was ~~like~~ <sup>either</sup> a tournament of words, ~~tense and disjointed~~  
 Elizabeth and ~~she~~ was looking on like a child, <sup>though she was maturer than either of them.</sup> ~~her mouth slightly open.~~

"Mine," he said, "my sins," leaning back and gazing up at the ceiling, <sup>a</sup> ~~his~~ glass in his hand, <sup>its</sup> ~~with the~~ ice clinking against the sides, "oh, they're like shadows, they come and go ..."

"How?" Pinkie asked, her chin quivering a little this time --- in case he got serious.

"Well, I never know what's going to turn out a sin --- something said --- something thought --- rarely anything ~~done~~ <sup>done</sup>" ~~Elizabeth~~ /Dial

"No, I was talking about ordinary sins."

"Sleeping with people, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Oh, well, ~~Elizabeth said~~ they're not so big as they seem!"

And he could have kicked himself for saying it, because a look not of relief exactly but half-excited <sup>determination</sup> ~~determination~~ flashed into her eyes, making them glint for a moment, while the relief was in her mouth, in a certain sweet repose that settled there for a few seconds. And yet, why not ...? Why not give away your life with an easy gesture as with any other?

"I haven't time to be unfaithful," Elizabeth said.

~~"God, Pinkie, what an old girl you are, you are"~~ <sup>cc</sup> you're like the <sup>cap</sup> person who's got no time for reading!" Binkie cried. "Just not interested!"

~~"Well, I haven't"~~ ~~they laughed~~

"When I'm forty and the children are grown up," Elizabeth <sup>said</sup> ~~added~~ in a demure way, blinking, ~~her cheeks flushed from the gin,~~ "I may ~~///~~ cast my net around!"

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"Oh, well, if you say a few Hail Maries afterwards, I ~~suppose~~ <sup>expect</sup> that'll be all right." ~~for old mother's church~~

~~The sitting room had chintz-covered armchairs and a grand piano, all glowing and soft in an old style. He watched Pinkie stretch out her legs comfortably. Then, while his thoughts wandered, they got on to the subject of class. Elizabeth said that at the admiralty you could always tell the 'new' people who weren't out of the top drawer or anywhere near it. They always gave themselves away!~~

~~"And there are four standard give-aways that Gordy and I have noticed. They mark a person right off!"~~

~~Pinkie looked gleeful. "What are they?"~~

~~"Well, first, pouring milk in a cup before the tea," she replied.~~

~~"I always do," Pinkie said. "Nurse says it makes a stronger brew!"~~

~~"So it does, but that's not the point! It's allowed if you do it in revolt, darling, like you, but one could tell you a mile off --- gentry slumming it!"~~

~~"I see --- well, go on."~~

~~"The second one's 'pardon' --- instead of 'I'm sorry' or 'What did you say?'"~~

~~"Pardon's ghastly, I agree. But one can't really say 'What?' can one? It sounds a leetle straightforward, doesn't it?"~~

~~"But that's what manners are, darling! I think it sounds so robust!"~~

~~"And what's the third?" he asked her.~~

~~"Serviette for napkin," she said without looking at him. "That's a real give-away!"~~

at Elizabeth.

"Oh, in what way?" Elizabeth asked him with a quick look, half abashed and half admiring.

"Well, if you're an honourable it isn't very honourable sticking your nose into other people's lives as if you'd been set up as their judge by God Almighty—just muck from the past—and a dead past, too—that past wasn't even alive so why try and salvage a lot of dirty muck<sup>is</sup> from it?"

Elizabeth looked at Pinkie in confusion, and then they smiled at each other.

"I should think," Pinkie said in a quiet voice, rolling the ice round in her glass again, "that Liz didn't understand a word of that."

"All I said was people give themselves away sometimes without meaning to!" Elizabeth cried.

"Exactly!" Pinkie said with a laughing glance at Granville, who ~~smiled back at her suddenly, his~~ flush dying.

"Is he always like that?" Elizabeth asked her.

"Yes."

"That's the trouble if you marry a brainy type!"

"Isn't Gordon brainy?"

"Yes, and he's exactly the same!" And she gave Granville a warm, concerned, motherly look, seeming to see him from above for a moment.

They went up to bed early. ~~So far Pinkie had been sleeping in one of the small spare rooms, but now they were given the bedroom of Honour, where Elizabeth and Gordon usually slept.~~ It was a wide, low-

ceilinged room with an immense bed, and one of the windows looked straight down a wide valley.

quite a bit stronger."

"Wait till I'm your age," David said in a clear, factual way.

By that time they'd arrived. Elizabeth was back, and the children were swept off to lunch in the kitchen. Elizabeth looked full of life: "I phoned Gordy in Malta, can you imagine that? He sounded sweet!" They had beer with their lunch and decided on a sleep afterwards.

*The next day*

~~That evening~~ he went for a walk alone, ~~along~~ the road that went past the house. It dipped ~~down~~ between trees, shaded, with the valley on one side and a tall, grassy embankment on the other. The sunset didn't glow like the previous evening. It cast a thin yellow light over everything, making the shadows long and clear. It was still warm. He leaned on a fence, gazing across the valley.

Birds wheeled down on the field before him, most of them invisible, making a long soaring whistle as they swooped. But they didn't disturb the silence. It was strange, this silence: if he really concentrated he could hear noises inside it of which he'd been unaware before --- a dog barking in the distance, the sound of leaves moving slightly behind him, the whistling of other birds in the trees.

~~He could see cattle grazing in the distance, and there were long black shadows across the field, like an immense plain.~~ He could smell newly-cut grass. ~~There was a tiny flurry of wings, then a chirrup, and the long soaring whistle again.~~ Things were so still round him that he might always have been standing there. Time was only a movement that took place in his head: it didn't exist round him. This stillness, like a breath that came from another world, didn't develop: it just was, in the endless blue of the sky, quite still. One couldn't say it was infinity,

and endless, progression, either. It hadn't beginning or end. There was just this absolute stillness of space, without time.

He sank into this outer time for a moment, lost, his own time gone.

A bird sang piercingly in the embankment behind him, actually in the bushes clinging to the side, where it was dark and enclosed. The song was poured out with marvellous leisure, every pause seemed fixed from somewhere else, from the outer spaces, not haphazard or a matter of choice. And it was like a comment from that outer time, on the things all round. The comment seemed to point out this and that, with such reflective beauty, so leisurely and calm, without apparent theme, sometimes like a cry, or like a word of pity, or a sudden, soaring, joyful cry, pausing to let the song fall into the silence, with a rhythm that was also beyond time, so bold and unceasing and triumphant that he almost cried out.

→ He remembered certain scenes from the past --- they swept into his mind suddenly, the names and places forgotten: tea in a garden with tall grass near by, hyacinths like a blue cloud in a wood, a voice across the fields. ~~clear sunlight at dawn~~ And with them came a sense of miserable regret, like darkness <sup>suddenly</sup> falling <sup>on</sup> ~~over him~~, as if he'd lost something of <sup>stupendous</sup> ~~terrific~~ importance somewhere along the path ~~of life~~ and couldn't say where. There ---! It was on the tip of his tongue. He'd nearly got it: the key! But it didn't come.

~~The next day was social; Elizabeth took them to a castle a few miles away, a rugged, glowing pile at the top of a hill, with a long drive leading up to it. She knew the owner. There were tennis courts behind, and a few people were playing.~~

~~Only one turret of the old castle remained, the rest having been~~

→  
T.S.P. 584.

"No, I didn't mean that! I meant, when would you come?"

"When I've had it, I suppose."

He nodded in silence and said, "But that's in nine months."

As quickly she changed the argument: "Well, I could come out now and then come back for the birth."

Later, just before they went downstairs, she said, "Of course, the heat'll be ghastly with a child inside."

He took no notice of this, feeling happy and reckless at the same time. He could see her as she would have been down at Aldercote a hundred years ago, in the vast rooms, walking down the gallery with its tall, framed pictures, her flickering, lost gaze not out of place. And Grove didn't matter! Indeed, he added to her stature! He was her servente, as the Italians used to call it; and Granville remembered from his reading of the Devonshire memoirs how the fifth duke of Devonshire had lived with his wife and mistress together, and how his wife had adored his mistress like a sister! A little voice told him that he didn't live in a palace, and that he was far from being a duke; also the duke hadn't lived with his wife's lover! But he told himself it was only the sense of glitter and space he was after.

*That* *lots of people came.*  
~~The~~ evening went well. Pinkie put down a neat gin ~~and~~ and said in a loud voice, ~~surveying the room full of people,~~ that she felt 'a world better for it', and strode across to get another. In this sort of mood she infected <sup>Pip</sup> Granville; he, too, talked loudly ~~Tommy Bligh was~~ there in a green waistcoat, looking spruener than a few hours before.

There was a man with a lined, sunburned face who'd worked in Ismailia for five years and was just off to the Aden Protectorate; he told Granville he knew Basrah like the back of his hand; he said after

a pause, "Hideous, isn't it?", and they both laughed. They agreed that there was a 'great godly hideousness' in the Arab countries which was fascinating; this was after the second drink; their eyes sparkled, and the women were beginning to laugh loudly, especially Elizabeth, who also had bare shoulders, her dress black and simple, rather tight, making her look neat and determined, with flashing, black eyes.

At dinner she gave him the place of honour, where Gordon usually sat. The talk went along at a smacking pace, hardly pausing but never pushed deliberately; the table had been pulled out to its full length and took up nearly the whole room; there was a last yellow glow from the sun coming in at the window almost horizontal, shining on to Elizabeth's face at the other end of the table, lighting on her lips now and then; the wall-panelling was mellow and red-tainted in the light; the women were all young, and the drink had brought flushes to their cheeks. The man next to him turned to him with deference and asked how Gordon was these days; he'd assumed that they moved in the same world --- travelling and politics; Granville swallowed his astonishment and said he'd only met Gordon once or twice perfunctorily; he spoke in a careless way as he hadn't done since his arrival from Basrah.

Ar diana He heard Elizabeth say something about 'while manners maketh man, it only maketh an ordinary man, whereas a gentleman maketh manners!' */Ditals*

~~The man from Ismailia, who was at her side, very flushed now, pouted and said something objecting to this, and his wife, sitting opposite him, said that the attitude was 'typical' of him. Elizabeth screamed with laughter for some reason, while the man glared across at his wife and said hotly, "What a damned, pilfering lot of bloody nonsense you do talk sometimes!" There was further laughter, from the other women, but the man's wife~~

didn't look in the slightest rebuffed; she only pursued her argument as if it was quite natural for a man to show indignation; she even showed a peculiar deference to it, and yet also she stood up to him, only without defiance; a glow even seemed to come into her as she stood her ground, but it included her husband as well. The argument got on to shooting, and the husband cried out, laying down his knife and fork, "But the blighter never brings down a feather!" and he turned to Elizabeth, still pouting, with grease from the meat on his lips, and said, "You seen 'im at it?" The answer was, "No, darling!" The wife said quite calmly, "He got a wonderful bag last season." Her husband made a terrific pah like a wind across the table, and set about his food again, murmuring to himself about how the chap needed 'a sound kick in the arse' and he'd give it to him himself if duty, 'that bloody ghoul always showing its face', hadn't called him out to the Aden Protectorate. The men roared at this. He was looked on as a great performer. He had pet hobby-horses, it seemed, and liked to damn everything up to the prime minister and down again. Tommy took up the subject of the sax again, sitting low in his chair with his paunch sticking out under his waistcoat; he showed no recognition of Pinkie though she sat next to him, and she took this with a chuckle, raising her glass to him. Granville roared with the rest, feeling he'd only really arrived in England this moment: the rest, in London, was dead, grey, neutral matter!

He gazed at the faces round the table --- they were ~~so~~ dramatic and full, flushed in the last <sup>evening</sup> ~~yellow~~ light. <sup>10/</sup> They seemed to have the whole English past in them, ~~the~~ not just project their own feelings, ~~and~~ ~~return:~~ There was the dramatic mark of the past, <sup>the was</sup> dug into their flesh. / Their <sup>social</sup> authority was dead now but it still showed in their ~~faces~~

They were redder and wilder than faces in London.

They were local land agents, a 'squire' or two, a farmer.

Next morning he sat down at his desk without a moment's thought and wrote the end of the report in a few minutes, making hardly a pause. He wrote that it was simply a question of the middle class getting power. As its power increased the Arab countries would come to resemble the Christian countries more and more. It had to be gone through. All you could do was to help the process on. Proposals flashed into his mind with terrible swiftness. Where T.I.M. had the power it should subsidise development-programmes, offer loans and so forth. T.I.M. should purchase a certain amount of land for disposal among its employees; a new industrial city outside Basrah might be the result. There should be a new housing scheme for employees. A health-insurance policy should be started, there ought to be arrangements with the university of Baghdad for the officialisation of T.I.M. educational certificates in the Compound school. How the words clattered out!

He wrote it in a reckless and cynical frame of mind: suicidal, almost. 'Let them get on with it!' he thought. 'And meanwhile the rest of us will lie low, keeping what little flame we can alive, until it's all finished --- keeping the flame for our children's children!'

He suddenly added at the end: 'These developments are part of a great religious programme. They are the extension of Christ to the Muslim world. ~~The middle class in the blind instrument by means of which Christ is carried to all men.~~'

Next day he took the report to be typed out by the Secret Weapon.

~~To hell with them!~~

On his way out of the office he met Hanni who to his astonishment said, "Well, how do you like the girls at the Marquis?"

"What girls?" His mouth fell open.

~~the four of them rushing to and fro looking for collar studs, hair grips,  
links, nail polish, and taking a sip of wine or brandy from the bottles  
in the ditch.~~

~~The performance was a great success, and every seat in the tiny  
theatre was taken; the New Studio was off Cambridge Circus, over some  
shops, and the long window of its bar overlooked the street; it was a  
comfortable, plushy place which according to Dick had been used for  
'naughty shows' in the nineties. Not that the performance was good,  
but the audience thrilled to the dark skins the moment the curtain went up.~~

Joy Celeste <sup>She had</sup> ~~tried to make the opposite effect to darkness by~~  
painting her skin a light yellow and holding in her lips to avoid the  
'nigger-look') <sup>a lot of</sup> ~~For~~ hair-dance was the triumph of the evening and there  
was long clapping <sup>^</sup> ~~for her dance, which she refused to give.~~ The chorus  
bumped into each other and danced <sup>lovingly,</sup> ~~mechanically, their eyes all over the~~  
~~place~~ but the audience loved it. Dick nudged Granville all the way  
through, winking at him in the darkness; Pinkie, on the other side, was  
enthralled and sat there with her chin sticking out as if the ungainly  
people on the stage were vindicating a certain wild attitude to life for  
her; she asked Dick in the interval if they and their dances were  
'straight out of the village', and Dick spluttered with laughter --- he  
said he was astonished at her naivety, they were all more likely 'out of  
Pimlico by Billingsgate'! During the hair-dance she leaned over to  
Dick in the darkness, with Granville between them, and said in a loud  
voice, her eyes fluttering and an abashed but defiant pout on her lips.  
"Is this the girl Pip's lost his heart to?" Dick said softly "I think  
that about squares the matter off, yes," to which she had nothing to say.  
She only leaned back reflectively. ~~The hair-girl appeared to impress~~



The hair-girl seemed to impress Pinkie

her in a dark way. But at the end of the dance, during the wild clapping, she qualified ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> by saying loudly to Dick, "She'd be ~~quite~~ <sup>more</sup> attractive if she ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> a square meal, wouldn't she?"

~~The scene on the stage was garish, hung with straw and papier-mache fruit, showing a golden beach with palm trees and mud huts. It was like a pantomime scene from Robinson Crusoe. There was shouting and frenzied drum beating, and the audience clapped and roared at~~

~~everything.~~ The posters had advertised the 'real Arab dance and Dervishes', <sup>which meant that</sup> Nearly every ~~one~~ <sup>a chaos.</sup> of the dance was ~~fast and loud~~. If a dance began slowly it had to go up to a deafening crescendo. It was a tiny stage, making it difficult for all the chorus to ~~appear at once.~~ <sup>get around.</sup>

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A ~~Lushad,~~ <sup>fuckin'</sup> Dick ~~said in a hoarse,~~ "Get off my ~~toes!~~ <sup>toes!</sup>" ~~the~~ <sup>ed</sup> sound across the stage.

~~Sweat was pouring down the drummer's face and dripping on to his cheeks while the pianist sat cool and clerical in a striped blue suit, glancing up at the stage every few moments. When the curtain went down after one dance he heard someone sitting behind them say, "They're so extraordinarily vivid, aren't they?"~~

~~The curtain stuck and pieces of palm tree drifted down as the dancers pushed and sweated past each other and tripped up like elephants, while the music got louder and louder and seemed to lose all rhythm.~~

Only the hair-girl was remarkable. There was a real ferocity in her dance; <sup>it seemed to</sup> ~~and again he found himself catching his breath for fear~~ her head <sup>might</sup> ~~would~~ go flying off. ~~And the leader of the troupe pranced round her in an ineffectual way as he'd done in the rehearsal, only with a sheepish expression now as if the revolving of the black head underneath him was a surprise --- a social surprise. Someone's dress ripped with a loud tearing noise in the chorus. The hairy arm of one of the stagehands~~

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~~was visible for a moment, trying to mend it. Only the hair-girl could have compared with the plump, lazy dancers of Basrah. The audience applauded madly, stamping the floor. There was a political element in this: the Rubath crisis had not long been over -- they were applauding Arab life in general.~~

→ ~~The hair-girl~~ <sup>she</sup> came out to the bar afterwards ~~where everyone was assembled. She was~~ in a hard mood and talked at the top of her voice, looking small and shrivelled, with ~~very~~ pale cheeks, her high cheek-bones sticking out; ~~more than had noticed before~~ and she had a short girlish frock on which made her look fourteen. ~~The club had a number of important sponsors, Dick told him, and some of the drinks were on the house. A man with shining bags under his eyes and thin, yellow hair, his neck flushed bright scarlet, got up on a chair and said that the management would like to offer a free drink to everyone, in the selfish and calculated hope that they would all become members of the club.~~

To his <sup>Pinkie's cousin,</sup> astonishment, Granville saw Deryk Grysham, <sup>was ~~the~~ also there,</sup> next the bar, and they all greeted each other. Deryk was most polite, bobbing up and down as he took Pinkie's hand, and singing out, "Hullo!", his shoulders hunched a little. And, "How nice to see you again, <sup>Pip</sup> Philip!" he cried. <sup>Then he</sup> Granville asked after Beatrice and in return for this Deryk asked him <sup>was ~~the~~ also there,</sup> when his leave would be over -- but there was so much noise near the bar that he didn't answer, not that he knew the answer anyway. People were pressing forward for their free drinks, in a gentle way, easing and leaning themselves against each other, smiling and making jokes. There was scent, the smell of hair-oil, smoke, brandy on the air. <sup>→</sup> Most of ~~them were good-looking, with clear faces, the dress was casual and yet~~

X

Suddenly Joe Clockwork, talking to Hanni in a 643.  
whisper, lifted his head & made a high-pitched laugh, like a scream,  
which made everybody look round.

~~with a curious heavy remoteness from her, and a gaucheness of limbs that  
was miraculously hidden by his softness. This softness set up a strange  
dramatic contradiction: sometimes in profile his face looked rapt and  
shadowy, unnaturally still like an image in the desert.~~

Pinkie said that <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ high-pitched laugh, which Clockwork repeated  
~~several times, making everyone look round,~~ was his 'social speciality' ~~20~~

He did it to mark himself out from other people, but he never did it  
more than a set number of times; ~~on any occasion~~; for a brief appearance  
at a cocktail party he ~~surely~~ did it ~~approximately~~ once, with perhaps a  
parting one at the door; for a long party there would be five or six,  
louder as people drank more; at a dinner-party he kept it for the dessert. ~~20~~

**I**t was meant to show everybody that something very special was going on in  
his corner of the room.

Dick went on talking to the pale girl behind <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ potted plant,  
leaning towards her, seeming to elect her the only person in the room;  
his eyes were clear and twinkling; he treated every one else casually,  
as if the evening had only one purpose for him.

~~A few people began to do some silly dancing in the middle of the  
room, to no music, while onlookers beat out a rhythm with their feet;  
three or four couples started it, and Clockwork and Hanni joined them,  
leaning against each other while keeping their hands at their sides; they  
moved slightly, their eyes closed, and Clockwork kissed her lightly on  
the brow once or twice; this performance seemed a strain to her, she was  
steeling herself to it and keeping her eyes closed, her lips pursed in  
a tell-tale way, showing how the display hurt her. But Clockwork was  
untroubled, and when he opened his eyes, gazing at the people round him,  
it was with a drowsy expression, as if he'd really been asleep. Pinkie,~~

+

~~from their tables to bow and curtsy and he saw one man quietly put his  
tail in his pocket as she passed, then she was gone and the roars were  
as loud as before.~~

~~Suddenly there was a shining black riding boot on one of the  
tables and Granville watched a flushed, thick-set man with twinkling,  
bloodshot blue eyes shout at one of the waiters, "waiter, come here!  
Lady Mairie left her shoe behind!", and he promptly dropped the boot on to  
the man's tray, where there happened not to be any glasses.~~

~~Elizabeth had been there all evening but in one of the side rooms,  
and Granville, having pulled his fair weight at the bar and drunk two or  
three more glasses than he'd paid for by posting himself close to one of  
the tables,~~

Pip

~~whirled her round the floor at a breathless speed.~~

Elizabeth

~~She looked superb, her hair done up in a kind of~~

W/P

~~surprised look.~~ mantilla, with long ear-rings; she wore a long black gown and had made no  
effort at fancy dress apart from a flimsy horse-hair tail, also black,  
that hung from a lace bow at the back.

~~Then groups formed for a Scottish~~

~~air and each had to improvise a reel, with the others dancing round him,~~

~~he could see Pinkie in another group bobbing up and down, her mouth wide~~

~~open in a crooked grin, while Nell pulled at her dress from behind, laughing~~

~~breathlessly.~~ The band looked down from their tiers in a gingerly way,

not showing the slightest amusement ~~or sense of participation,~~ and seeming

to go higher and higher as the evening went on.

~~Pinkie told him in the~~

~~interval that all the fainting set, which apparently included Clockwork,~~

~~were in one of the side rooms sitting over cards and champagne; he asked~~

~~her to point the room out to him and she took him there through one of~~

~~the corridors leading from the back; it was a talk room with heavy curtains~~

~~and a dim, glittering chandelier in the middle, and there was a complete~~



~~just there, all things in the world were mostly young people, and nearly all of them, and deflated-looking, by one of the windows he called out, ~~and a lockwork, square silent, waiting for a player to make his move,~~ hardly any of them wore tails or frocks. [Pinkie said <sup>that clockwork's set</sup> ~~they~~ regarded fancy dress as an 'un-cool' thing to do; they wore dinner jackets and their expressions were tired and casual, ~~as if from repletion~~ as if from repletion of the senses; ~~Pinkie~~ <sup>she</sup> told him that <sup>'puller'</sup> ~~this~~ was ~~the~~ 'the thing' now --- ~~spailon', apparently,~~ you couldn't even sun-bathe when you found yourself ~~as you found yourself every year~~ in the south of France; you had to look 'fainting'! Hell was more or less in this set but she danced too much; if she could just sit and 'sort of wilt' at a card-table for four or five hours in the evening she would qualify. ~~and as it was she 'made ten times'~~ Hanni's brilliant zebra costume stood out in the room like a precious carpet; Pinkie said that this was quite all right because Hanni, being 'exotic', could do nothing 'un-cool'.~~

h.p.

~~Downstairs supper was being served in a room of the same style, with long tables striped white and silver, with banks of roses in the middle; Elizabeth and Bowley Patton were already there, and he and Pinkie joined them. Elizabeth gave him a customary blink of the eyes as if ~~wasn't it that he was going to do,~~ but since he sat down like every one else it passed. She began talking at the top of her voice about how some 'absolute boob' upstairs had asked her if her black dress was meant to represent an elephant's skin; to which Bowley Patton said quietly that the 'gentleman' may have been referring to the fact that when she danced she did so 'not unlike an elephant'. Elizabeth laughed and said to ~~Pinkie~~ that 'our Gordy has had too much wine', and that he'd been saying to her what a 'gorgeous piece' she, Pinkie, was! It was true, actually~~

considering a pay-claim, and left the money on his desk before she went out in the morning. ~~Dick said that the plays performed were written by a kind of committee employed by the club, and that their idea was to deal with one social problem after another, to make a 'clean sweep' of modern life. The place had already been nicknamed 'Protest Hall' for this reason, and people lapped it up. There were to be no stars and the plays were never to draw attention to themselves by being 'over-dramatic' or in any way idiosyncratic; they were as far as possible simple and clear statements of a current problem with as much drama as it would need to sustain the interest of the audience. Granville was beginning to feel a peculiar unspoken indignation in his life, and he wondered if these 'protests' would contain it for him in some way. His life was taking more and more roots in London, he noticed, and ultimately he hoped that it would take on a stillness such as he'd known in the Sussex days, and false hopes would disappear, he wouldn't think of Basrah again.~~

~~Dick had a copy of the Studio club policy sent to him, and he read in it that the idea of the theatre as 'the pulpit of modern life' was to be applied, the West End commercial managers had kept modern life out of the theatre, it added. He began going to the Studio club once or twice a week, with or without Dick, there was a secret pleasure in sitting in the darkness with the evening paper in his hand; the stage glowed and he fell into a dream, sometimes what happened on the stage was more real to him than Chaworth Road; he would dream about it, and wake up in the morning expecting the situation of the play to unfold before him instead of his and Dinkie's world. There was one play of protest after another; a negro winning his way through race prejudices in a northern mining town, a working man victimised by his foreman, a private soldier pitching himself~~



~~and seemed actually to be straining herself to recognise the tune, though this was impossible because it was too quick. She had none of her usual forbearance and dignity; and though the singing wasn't singing, and jarred on the nerves, there was a smile of appreciation on her face. They went down to the lower deck and sat on benches, crammed together, while someone played the guitar. Nearly all the guests were personal friends of Runnock's -- and suddenly from across the gangway, Runnock threw him a hard, resentful glance as if to say, 'And who the devil are you?' Granville turned away, deciding not to notice it, and said something to Elizabeth and the hit-tune young man who sat opposite him; luckily she smiled back at him in a vivacious way and when he glanced at Runnock again there was no malevolence in his gaze at all, but even friendliness, a soft and gracious look. All this went on invisibly, a little drama unseen by anyone else. The look in Runnock's eye was too direct, too intimate, both when it was hard and when it was gracious, for it to be meant for anyone else. Elizabeth, being a friend of Lady Maine's, and known by everyone, was a good friend to have there.~~

~~There was no wildness as at the ball. The river was lovely outside, flat and touched with red from the sun. At the Isle of Dogs they turned round, the boat kicking up a wash with its paddles, and the party, now that oil lamps had been lit, became more boisterous. The bouncy young man kept up a constant chatter, taking his audience for granted. Pinkie and Elizabeth seemed rapt, glued to him; never missing a syllable or breath. He'd never seen Liz quite like it before. She was so docile and girlish. She ducked her head ~~in a~~ diffident way, like her daughter Jane for a moment, and kept saying, "Oh, you bouncer, George!", then to Pinkie, "Isn't he extraordinary?"~~ Granville listened

*Elizabeth suddenly*  
*and then chit-chat,*  
*Pip couldn't make it out.*  
*Stay with the powerful*  
*She*  
*after a completely flat remark he had made, like*  
*"I go for the quick tunes."*



"We're off to the Melbourne, what about you?" He and Pinkie went in George's car; Elizabeth was travelling with Runnock. George spoke to Granville for the first time --- how did he think 'the old engine' sounded? Granville didn't know and didn't care, but he said, "All right, I suppose." "You suppose --- !" George cried with a rushed little laugh, "I only had it decarbonised today!" "Good Lord," Granville murmured, looking out of the window. He sat trying to think up something mechanical to say, and chose carburettors. At once George turned to him as if he'd said something stunning, and went into a long speech about the 'double-carb' --- "The double-carb's the job, it really is --- fit it in a day --- I said, look how does that adapt to the rest and he said, fine, so I said get to work --- you just have to give it a tickle and whoof! the girl's off --- stands to reason, doesn't it, but there you are --- rattling away I was, the old bus --- but very sound, though, don't you think so? Do you?" He fixed Granville with youthful, darkly sharp, friendly eyes. "Yes, I do," Granville said, trying to give him the same glance back.

~~At the Melbourne there was a long table under dim lights where most~~  
~~of the river party guests sat.~~ And ~~once more~~ there was <sup>more</sup> champagne. Pinkie and George danced together --- she showed him how to whirl round on the same spot without getting giddy: you keep your eyes on the other person's eyes! And she <sup>gave him such an</sup> ~~swept him round with an~~ oh-you-charming-devil look <sup>it was a wile</sup> ~~on her~~ face, ~~apparently more abandoned than ever she'd been with Grove, and in~~  
~~a role Granville couldn't connect with her --- it was just too~~ <sup>Pip</sup> ~~extraordinary~~ <sup>remotely</sup> ~~for words; he~~ <sup>turned</sup> ~~sat~~ <sup>he</sup> and stared at ~~them~~ with puzzled fascination, ~~wondering if~~  
~~she'd gone cuckoo!~~ George wasn't a 'faun'. He ~~wasn't~~ <sup>at all!</sup> ~~what she called~~ <sup>didn't compare</sup>  
~~an~~ 'oomph-man' <sup>but not George!</sup> ~~by~~ Grove had oomph, ~~she always said~~ George was pleasant, inconsequential, cheerful --- not the sort of person who interested her

~~back in the office~~

He said nothing about the interview to Pinkie. It seemed she'd forgotten he was to have it. ~~That evening he went to a cinema in Islington and was too tired even to follow the plot; there was a news-reel in which some poor creature of a hare was chased by whippets; it leapt through the air frantically, and always the hounds followed, decoying it this way and that, until at last its strength gave out and it tumbled under them, a limp ball of fur. Behind him a woman murmured, "Poor thing! What a damned shame!" in exactly the same voice as his mother would have done, and tears smarted in his eyes.~~

A few days later when his boat-ticket arrived <sup>she</sup> ~~Pinkie~~ murmured vaguely, "I suppose I'll be joining you in a few months, won't I?" He nodded glumly and they said no more. Grove came over again. <sup>He</sup> ~~Granville~~ was once more struck by <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ friendly confidence, ~~in him~~, and felt revived; the events of the last few weeks, including the question of the child, seemed unimportant. ~~He couldn't imagine Grove in a dark or irritable mood. He told Granville, standing by the hearth and gazing out of the window in his curious abstract and yet local way, that he loved everybody; he really meant that; he didn't turn away from anyone; he said that a person aroused his good will whoever he was, unless he was clearly a "sane". He was trying to give Granville to understand that he'd intended no malice against him.~~

A party gathered ~~again~~ in the music-room that evening. Grove talked most of the time, making everyone laugh. While he talked, rattling away without the slightest embarrassment, <sup>Pip</sup> ~~Granville~~ asked himself, why should he leave? ~~Again the absurdity of insisting on clear~~ <sup>if he was to be one anyway?</sup> ~~form occurred to him:~~ why not be a subordinate here? But his thoughts

1 cap / ital

INSERT

770. insert

Therefore he brought warmth and also the greater chill, in an enigmatic combination which had to do with his strange self, that was always hidden, all the more so went round in a sickening way, gone almost the moment they entered his

head. He found that Grove conducted a kind of human publicity service: he brought people together and talked admiringly about nearly everyone.

~~He sat in the centre of the room and already the house was filled with~~

~~his spirit.~~ But he never stayed long. He brought people together and then left, as if he had many such missions to fulfil.

He went down to Abbott's Road to say good bye. They knew nothing

about his having resigned, and he left it vague; ~~a word was enough for~~

~~them; he said he had had a few things to clear up with the head office,~~

~~so he was late in going back. He was surprised when he stepped off the~~

~~bus to see how fresh and clean everything in the district looked. The~~

~~shop fronts were newly painted and the houses of Abbott's Road looked~~

~~like tiny farmhouses, not dingy at all but with a warm, bustling life~~

~~going on inside each of them. The windows were bright with coloured~~

~~curtains, and the hedges in front were trimmed.~~

~~He sat with them in the back room, with the window overlooking the~~

~~gardens open at the bottom. His mother divined that something <sup>bad</sup> unpleasant~~

had happened but said nothing. She only asked quietly, "Is Pinkie going

back with you?" From his panic-stricken glance she knew everything.

His father was gracious as always, a little formal, gazing with narrow

eyes into the garden. ~~He trembled and could eat nothing.~~ The table was

laid with cheese and lettuce and celery, and the tea-pot stood under a

cosy in the scullery as it always had in his childhood. ~~He drank one~~

~~cup after another. He always returned to this world of Abbott's Road~~

~~alone, it seemed, but it couldn't help him; his mother and father had~~

~~nothing to say they could only watch his distress and hope for the~~

~~best. The trains passed in the distance, stopping and starting again~~

~~with a low grinding noise. He tried to talk but his mind was ineffective.~~

quick

because of his emblem ~~that~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~repartee~~  
and ~~the~~ cleverly transparent boasting, have  
was something ~~but~~ ~~about~~ ~~him~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~  
~~know~~ ~~others~~ - He knew - ~~seemed~~ ~~to~~ - ~~that~~ ~~he~~  
was hunting Garamilla, hunting his life:

but he did it like someone passing in a  
little touch of life; it had ~~been~~ ~~him~~  
often enough; he carried no sign of the  
pain in his eyes, anywhere. ~~He~~ ~~made~~  
~~you~~ ~~could~~ ~~be~~ ~~patty~~. He made ~~the~~  
~~capital~~ ~~and~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~triumph~~  
winning a wife from an attractive husband,  
a sunny husband. ~~Yet~~ ~~it~~ ~~wasn't~~  
any more than the capital he made

all day, out of the smaller world, half  
joking. ~~He~~ ~~had~~ ~~more~~ ~~hunger~~ ~~for~~ ~~action~~  
~~for~~ ~~what~~ ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~hoping~~ ~~than~~ ~~Dickens~~  
~~He~~ ~~was~~ ~~simply~~ ~~fulfilling~~ ~~a~~ ~~role~~  
Honor in ~~him~~ ~~to~~ ~~by~~ - ~~to~~ ~~who~~ ~~thinks~~  
what in people? destiny? ~~And~~  
Pip had no connection with the capital  
being made ~~of~~ ~~him~~ ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~the~~  
very well ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~at~~ ~~all~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~

he did it a  
times a day

the action of this destiny: he realized  
that. Something made Goro wild a stout  
to do it; perhaps he had no other way of  
surviving. It was the opposite of Pip's  
way of surviving. In the end it wasn't

a good way to survive, building a 1000 bests: you needed me.  
So Pip almost wanted to allow him this present, makeshift triumph:  
that much  
he under good ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~end~~ ~~it~~ ~~wasn't~~  
dimly



BOOK IIICHAPTER 12.

People started calling at the house again, ~~and a group even~~  
~~began to form, with the house as its centre.~~ Glenning, the publicity-man,  
was almost a daily visitor. ~~Some~~ Some of the other faces he'd seen that  
first evening re-appeared; there was <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ young girl Dick Pollocke had been  
talking to; her name was Lucy, and she always came with a girl-friend nick-  
named /Ginger/. The two of them sat in the music-room together, long-haired  
and quiet, sometimes with a book, sometimes just sitting. ~~and~~  
~~he himself came and went casually. It was quite pleasant. The young man~~  
~~called Gerald with the agreeable smile also came sometimes: the plastics~~  
~~firm he worked for was not many yards from the T.I.M. place, and often he~~  
~~and Pollocke walked over together.~~

For some time there were repeated phone-calls in the day which  
came to nothing when he answered them. He would pick up the receiver and  
say "Hullo", then there would be silence, followed by a ~~click~~ click at the ) e. c.  
other end. It got on his nerves and the idea became fixed in his mind that  
it was Grove trying to get through to Pinkie, though why Grove didn't know  
she worked in Wembley he couldn't explain. One day he shouted into the  
silent phone, trembling, "Stop it, you bloody fool, stop it!" He remembered  
afterwards how his voice had echoed up the well of the stairs in the empty  
house, like someone else's voice, rasping and strange; it sounded like  
someone bound and gagged.