

'THE NIGHT OF THE ECLIPSE'

Full m/s with corrections

THE NIGHT OF THE ECLIPSE

by

Maurice Rowden

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BOOK 1.

CHAPTER 1.

On the train from the coast he talked loudly and the other passengers looked a bit intimidated under the direct fire of his questions. When he addressed them they blinked and shifted---all except a quiet, well-bred young woman on the other side of the gangway who was evidently used to men shouting, and a woman from Johannesburg, her face dry and lined from the sun, who sat at his table and looked at him with admiration all the time because he seemed to her such a striking representative of the Old Country, which she had never visited before. When he told her that he didn't think 'blacks' should necessarily live apart from 'whites' she looked stunned and turned away for a moment. But he went on asking his polite questions of her and the others, turning and twisting in his seat as if the buffet-car was too small for his energies.

They entered the still, grey outskirts of London---a deathly shadow that stole over the train without a sound; so it seemed to him underneath his energetic manner. But he didn't turn and look out of the window because he wanted to keep it at bay a little longer; the shadow would steal over him, too, as it had just done over the train, and it would darken him, too, before many hours. He didn't glance to left or right but went on talking like a robust

Englishman---well, he was robust and he was English! But it was deliberate, he was acting up all the time and there was a note of danger in his voice, which perhaps was what made people glance at him curiously, their eyes slightly narrowed.

He told the quiet young woman about his house in Basrah and the irrigation scheme that was being planned by the government 'out there'. Now usually he would never think of using those words 'out there': it made a place seem impossibly far, and thus unreal, and he'd travelled too much to think like that. But it seemed more English to say 'out there' and he was being very assiduously the Englishman.

Only five years before he'd felt ashamed of being so 'English'. Everybody had told him, either as a compliment or criticism, "You're so English!" And he'd always taken it as a criticism. It meant stiff and aloof, like a man with ice down his back. If you were 'English' and, say, put your hand on another man's shoulder in a reassuring movement, the movement wouldn't come off: the other man would look at you with a half-frightened expression as if death had touched him! It was ridiculous but that was what he'd felt. He'd never felt stiff and aloof inside; indeed, quite the opposite---bubbling over, in fact, too hot to speak, not knowing where to put his hands and so forth! But the sound of those words, "You're so English!"---or it might be a glance a foreigner gave him, especially a swarthy foreigner with undisturbed black eyes---always paralysed him and fixed his body in a stiffness foreign to it. Try as he might to ease his limbs, and look in front of him naturally, he couldn't, and got stiffer and stiffer, seeing himself as the condescending Englishman used to being served, especially by foreigners. He would try terribly hard sometimes, smiling and gesticulating and saying 'Yes' and 'No' prematurely, and kicking his feet about in a

funny way, but it was no good, it only gave an impression of strangeness. Now a gentleman, an English gentleman, a real one, behaved quite differently. He always had ease. He didn't condescend, not if he was the genuine article. But otherwise---and Granville was an otherwise---you had to fight your way to it slowly. It didn't matter how easy and unstiff you were inside; you still had to fight through to a public manner.

He didn't think like that now. The word England meant other things---summer afternoons and tea on the lawn, for instance (though he could hardly remember having actually had tea on a lawn), and streams, small woods; then, well, [^]rather easy-going people, decent, even lazy perhaps; nothing to frighten him any more! The word also meant London, which he thought of as in a perpetual glow of late afternoon, when all the shops would have their lights on, and the buses looked like blazing liners putting out to sea. He'd been away two years now and he'd begun to realise that this sense he'd had of a stiffness being imposed on him from outside---of being narrowed down all the time, thwarted of a real self---must have been his own private fault, part of growing-up perhaps, not in the country itself. Indeed, something else had happened while he was away: far from losing the sense of being English he'd become proud of it---not mentally proud but quietly and glowingly so, in his sense of belonging to England [^] that clement, far-off island [^] in ~~exactly~~ the same way as his Arab friends belonged to Basrah. Before, he always used to say that there was something in England nowadays that turned your blood to water. But he'd forgotten that now.

Yet also he was afraid. He hadn't forgotten it completely. So he wouldn't look out of the window until he was really obliged to. He wasn't going to invite the slate roofs, which always suggested,

To 4(a)

— but a terrible, final rain,
in fair weather and foul, that it had just been raining, and the
tiny, curtained windows, and the cement back-yards like prison walks,
to drag him straight back again---'Come on, there---you, the dusky
fellow in the tropical jacket, your hair bleached from the nice sea-
trip! You with a dishdasha in your trunk that you thought you might
use as a dressing gown, we've got a few reminders for you now!'

So he went on talking at the top of his voice, his back straight
and his eyes unflin^{ning}ing. He hoped to keep it up. After all, he had
nothing to fear: he'd be off again in a couple of months. He'd be
back on the same boat that had brought him. He hoped to keep it up,
and disprove the idea that England watered your veins.

#

#

Chapter .

^{His}
~~The~~ house was on the edge of Shoreditch, not very far from Spitalfields market. He'd found it one day three years before; it was a quiet house with large Georgian windows, quite unique, surrounded by streets of small, drab houses built one on to the other. By an extraordinary chance it had been for sale. The company helped him with a mortgage and within a month he and ^{his wife} ~~Pinkie~~ were installed. It ^{was} ~~had been~~ assumed at the time that he'd ~~been~~ given a job with the head office in the City, for which the house would be ideal, being only a stone's throw away. But instead he ^{got the Middle East job,} ~~was offered a vacancy in the Middle East,~~ ^{and to his surprise} the company ^{let him} ~~let them~~ keep the house, ~~and Pinkie had let it while they were away.~~ It was more than big enough for them: three floors, but when they had children the attic floor, which they hardly ever used now, could be turned into a nursery. His wife was expecting a child now; at least, he thought so.

He found a taxi and asked the driver to take him along by the Palace, then through Charing Cross ~~road~~ along the Strand. It was a hot, cloudy evening and there were few people about. He liked the wall enclosing the Palace. He always used to walk here. ^{He} ~~The wall~~ had the look of the old world, humbler than the shops

MRS K. SMEATON

25 SYCAMORE AVENUE

HAKTON

LISED L 515 7 RB

13 year-old Nell and
the horse Shane.

While the Christmas tree from Norway was being put up;

6.

on the other side, with their tall fronts from Victorian times.

Paper fluttered along the gutter. Trafalgar Square made him feel he'd never been away. It might have been yesterday

evening that he ^{when} ~~had~~ caught ^{that} ~~the~~ night-train down to Southampton,

~~and~~ the taxi had taken him round the square ^{while workers} ~~when they were putting~~
~~up the Christmas tree that always came from Sweden.~~ ^{which every year Norway.} Its coloured

lights were being tested and kept flicking on and off like neat little flames in the darkness. Now there were no lights, only one red sign at the top of a building advertising a meat extract.

n.p. [There were more people along the Strand, walking slowly because of the heat, glancing in at the dusty shops. Then came the City, wonderfully solemn and still, quite deserted now that the offices were closed. ^{The taxi} ~~They~~ swept past the Stock Exchange, then ^{through} street after street, always silent, with the office fronts shuttered up. Only the pubs were open, with glowing lights inside. There was still damage from the war, huge gaps where there were only cellars, their walls tidily demolished so that they were like ^{meaningless} open boxes side by side, under the level of the road.

He had an impression of frightful grimness at first. The streets were so dumb and hollow-looking! It was all so dark!

He'd been in the blinding sun such a long time now, ^{r.c.} If only ^{they'd} ~~they'd~~ ^{house} bought a ^{place} in the country! They could easily have done

so. But he tried to remind himself that the darkness was only that of an overcast summer evening, which could happen in ^{Barak as well} ~~Mosul~~.

One simply mustn't look at things too closely. One had to start living here, then it felt all right. He remembered finding these same tall streets delightful once, because they were ^{always} ~~deserted~~ ^{in the evening.}

And then they reminded him of Pepys and Dr. Johnson. Crowds hadn't trampled on the old London here, not entirely. There was still St. Bartholomew's church hidden at the end of a ^{narrow} ~~long~~ walk,

intimate and crouching, ~~of~~ a ghostly, ancient grey. And outside was the great square of Smithfields where at one time they'd burned heretics. He remembered a royal procession ^{described from} in Pepys's diary--- perhaps Charles II's home-coming procession, or was it his queen's when she arrived from Holland?---how the horses' hoofs ^{had} made a deafening clatter on the cobbles, and the liveries and coats ^{had} made a blaze of colour in the narrow street, between houses that ^{had} almost touched at the floors above. It would have been possible to see the king within a few feet, from one of the windows. Life hadn't been ^{it's} separate ~~from one and untouchable~~ then as it was now. Everything had been within touching distance. But now we were ~~rather~~ strangers to ~~the life made by our own hands.~~ How massive these buildings were, hiding the light on either side! But sometimes, peeping between them, there was a bent Tudor house with tiny latticed windows, almost squashed but keeping an intimate, wry look.

He had an old-fashioned taxi, which was pleasant. They were difficult to come by these days. You could really lean back in their leather, jet-black seats, and the jolting reminded him of exciting taxi-rides before the war, ^{in childhood} ~~when he was a child.~~ The horn made a wonderful croaking noise like an old man coughing. There was a special smell, too---perhaps it was the leather. Yes, he'd known a London once---so busy and enthralling, always sunny! 'But then,' he thought, 'what a silly daydream!'

The sky was threatening and low-cast and gave the streets an indoor look, as if there were a roof over them. There was a strange dark stillness about everything. The twilight would come late and people would leave their curtains undrawn and their windows up because of the heat. Talk would be heard from behind the windows, drowsy and soft, then lights would go on one by one and fall across

the pavement, a faint yellow.

Commercial Road looked ~~quite~~ forsaken with its blank shop windows, some with their shutters down, dusty and unpainted. It made him feel quite alone. For a moment he couldn't think of a single friend he had in the city! Here there were a few people about. But they seemed to him to be walking ~~to~~ for no purpose of their own; ~~as if~~ they'd been flicked from out of the houses ~~in order~~ to act as a crowd for appearances' sake, on behalf of the city, at a miserable rate of pay. ^{The taxi} ~~They~~ passed a long, bare shop full of hideous furniture.

He'd be called 'Pip' again. For the past two years he'd been Philip or Mr Granville, except to Pinkie, ^{of course}. His best friend ^{Sarah} ~~in the office~~ ^{Mohammed} ~~who was~~ his assistant at the T.I.M. office, ^{Mohammed had} ~~called~~ ~~Mohammed~~, never departed from a simple 'Granville'. He'd ^{lost a sign of friendship} ~~dropped~~ the Mr. part as ~~they became friendly~~ but wouldn't go further.

'With a snip and a clip,' he thought, 'they'll reduce me to Pip!'

The taxi turned into Chaworth Road, where he lived. It looked like a long, squat monument of stone, ~~quite~~ deserted, sad and yet also cosy in a way. At the end stood his house, larger than the rest and quite distinct, jostled about by its smaller brethren, a little ridiculous with its lovely tall windows ^{and} ~~with~~ the old uneven glass which had remained intact through all the bombing raids on the City---quite remarkable. Goodness knows how it had got there, ^{rather} ~~or alternatively~~ how the ^{had got there} ~~other~~ houses, ^{they were an ordinary} ~~which were like those of an~~ ^{slum street} ~~ordinary slum street only smartened up a bit since the war, had got~~ ~~there~~

Everything looked ~~rather~~ shrivelled and dusty in the heat. The taxi began slowing up and he saw with some surprise that there were two cars outside the house, a low, cream-coloured sports car

and an old-fashioned one with a muddy, dented frame. But what about two cars? Cars had often stood there. ^{And} ^{he} ~~But~~ here ~~was~~ ~~he~~ trembling! The taxi drew to a halt and as he put his hand in his pocket to take out some money his eye caught the contrast between the back of his hand, brown and freckled, with bleached hairs, and the lightness of his tropical jacket, and in that moment he became aware of the distance that now existed between himself---reaching for money with a trembling hand ---and the past he'd just left behind him at the railway station. In a few minutes, it seemed, all those hot, blinding days in ~~Mesur~~ ^{Barrab} had been wiped out, as if to say that a man ~~can~~ ^{could} have only one destiny.

He glanced up at the house and saw that both his bedroom-window and that of the adjacent 'music-room' as they always called it were open at the bottom. There were guests, apparently. A wave of nervousness went through him like fingers stroking him inside. As he got out of the taxi he almost tripped over his ~~own~~ bags. The front door was open, which made matters worse because, not having to ring the bell, he would appear at the top of the stairs suddenly and they would all stare at him with astonished eyes---! But why astonished eyes? How absurd! It was his house, after all! Where on earth had this fear of people come from, ~~some of them, no~~ ^{even when they were} ~~some~~ ^{own}, his friends?

As the taxi drew away he looked up at the open windows a second time, hoping that someone would have heard him arrive and lean out of the window shouting, "There's Philip!" His train had got in at 7. 29 and he'd sent a cable about it. But Pinkie hadn't come to the station. She didn't do things like that on the whole. He was always straining for an intimacy that was barred him. She would say if he asked her, "But surely you can get ~~from~~ the station to here without me, ~~as well~~, can't you?"

He began dragging his heavy cases up the stairs. ~~Max dragged his heavy cases up the stairs to the~~ ~~There wasn't~~
~~a sound in the house.~~ There was the same stillness as in the street.
 The staircase was narrow and he banged his cases against the wall,
~~and~~ ^{ing} scraped his calf. The stair-carpet was loose; perhaps someone
 had dashed down the stairs or fallen and the rods had been torn out.
 Still there was no sound from above. He had a job getting the cases
 up, they were so big and heavy. The dove-grey distemper on the
 first landing, which he'd done himself two years before, had begun
 to flake, near a window where the damp came in. He'd have to have
 the drain pipe outside looked at.

Just as he turned on to the next flight of stairs he saw a young
 man standing by the telephone, ^{his back towards him.} Granville
 stopped, his heart beating fast. ~~which he had fixed on a bracket in the~~
~~space under the stairs.~~ But why? ^{well,} ~~He didn't know this~~
~~young man.~~ ^{from Adam!} But after all they had many friends, and this might be
 someone who'd slipped over from the office! ^{Yes} But the encounter was
 different, he didn't know why. It was like getting the breath of a
^{quite} ~~totally~~ strange world in his face; ^{chill and deathly.} He noticed the back of the young
 man's neck, ~~just~~ as if the strangeness lay there; the hair was soft
 and gently curled, not bristly at the base like most men's. ^{Granville's} ~~his~~
 mouth opened, dry with fear. Absurd! And the way the young man
 gripped his hand round the telephone had something ^{special} ~~particular~~ about
 it, ~~too.~~ ^{He} Granville ^{watched} ~~only saw~~ the plump, white knuckles ^{as if they} ~~which seemed~~
^{could} to speak; ^{and} ~~it was as if they~~ ^{seemed to} ~~were~~ saying, 'I'm here to stay and try
 and push me off if you can!' Then the young man turned round to him
 with a pleasant smile and said, "Oh, hullo!" And the strange
 impression was gone at once.

He nodded quickly and went on up the stairs to the music-room ^{without saying anything}
 Things were more or less as he'd left them two years before. There
 was no one in the music-room itself but he could hear voices. They
 must be in the room beyond, where he and Pinkie slept; ~~and which he~~

he'd often used that room as a study, if a glorified clerk in a so-called 'technical imports' firm could be said to have a study! The first thing he noticed when he got to ~~the~~ doorway was that his desk had been removed from the window to the opposite wall, where it served as a sideboard for the drinks. He had a swift impression of people holding glasses---a dull light from the open window and a renewed sense of the stillness in the street outside---quiet talk---everyone leaning against something or with one leg crooked casually over the other. There were only seven or eight people.

No one had yet seen him. Then a stray voice said, "Here's Jesus Christ!" And almost at once another cried, "It's Pip!" He was aware of another clerk in the firm, a young man called Dick Pollocke with whom he'd been at the T.I.M. training school five or six years before. Pollocke still sported a fair, wispy beard; then to his surprise he noticed that Pollocke was standing there without a stitch of clothing above his waist. His chest was sunburned, a smooth, faint brown. His feet were bare, too. But nobody seemed to mind. The others were dressed casually, for the summer. They weren't even looking in Pollocke's direction.

Most of the faces were familiar to him more or less. Someone nodded to him from the other side of the room, a boyish young man with agreeable eyes---was his name Gerald? At first he couldn't see Pinkie. She was probably pouring drinks by the chimney-piece. In place of the bed he noticed there were just cushions on the floor, and people were sitting there. Everyone seemed tired, not at all nervously alert as he was.

Pollocke was talking to a girl of about eighteen who nodded and smiled warmly at everything he said, while he leaned back, his chin lifted so that his beard was almost horizontal. He was leaning on a stick which Granville suddenly remembered from the

training school days. Pollocke had trouble with his leg now and then, due as far as he could remember to getting a sprain at school from cross-country running. At any rate, it wasn't permanent. The stick was the same as before, black and polished like ivory, of a heavy and menacing appearance like those military sticks that are supposed to contain rifles. In all other respects Pollocke was fit and agile, and for months ^{wouldn't worry him.} ~~the leg wouldn't worry him.~~

He caught sight of Pinkie with that little tremor of bewildered ^{which} ~~that~~ ecstasy ~~that~~ always came after an absence. She was standing on the other side of the room with a drink in her hand laughing at something, elegant and tall, her ear-rings shaking slightly, her eyes rather blind as they cast slowly round the room. Her head was raised as she laughed, and her mouth quivered as it always ~~did~~ when she was excited ~~about something.~~ She had less of a strained look than when she'd left ^{Basrah.} ~~Basrah.~~ Perhaps it was ~~his~~ ^{an} imagination but her face had ^{an} even more delicate look than usual and her eyes were an even lighter blue. All he could do was stare at her, having dreamed about her so much in the last month.

She wore a print dress with short sleeves, her neck long and slim. The ear-rings ~~she had on~~ were silver, the shape of the Muslim crescent, he noticed. He hadn't seen them before. Perhaps she'd picked them up in the market near the South Gate in ^{Basrah} ~~Basrah~~, where old men sat beating copper trays. She'd bought him a pair of cuff-links there once, but on his last ^{day} ~~in Basrah~~, ^{here,} sick with the heat and with being away from her, though she'd only gone a month, he'd stepped on them in the bedroom and the stones went into tiny blue fragments the colour of the sea. They ~~had~~ looked so beautiful on the floor! He'd no idea how they came to be there, under his feet, but perhaps Kath'm, his house-boy, had swept them off the dressing table with his duster, which he used much like a fly-whisk, beating at objects with

gracious
a certain / thing.
E.L.

He wa^{yed} to her but she didn't see him. She was always slow to come to consciousness ^{that} like ~~this~~. He wondered who had called his name. Perhaps it was the young man named Gerald, or was ^{the name} ~~it~~ Harold? Her blue eyes flickered gently, and she bent forward a little to talk to someone at her side. How ~~extraordinarily~~ peaceful and happy she looked! Then she turned slowly and sightlessly, as if by inward knowledge, lowering her head and gazing towards the door, still in her conversation, smiling and nodding with the ~~lovely~~ ^{always} charm she showed to friends. Then their eyes met and a delighted, childish smile, no longer only charming, came on to her face. His nervousness ebbed away. There was so little intimacy between them when all was said and done, but still they gave each other courage when they looked at each other ^{like that!}

"Pinkie!"

"Sweetheart!"

They pushed across the room and kissed each other in their awkward fashion, rather formal, holding each other for a moment. She looked so cool. Her shoulders had a wonderful smoothness and her hair shone like sand where the sun had bleached it in front.

"Hullo, you old bastard!" she murmured with her roguish expression and a chuckle. "How was the trip?"

"Oh, not so dusty!" ~~you know~~

Nearly the whole of the ^{Barrack} ~~mosque~~ office had turned ^{out} / to see her off, including Mohammed. That seemed a great time ago now, though it was just under four weeks. Her skin had kept its golden brown colour, from the bathing they'd done in the T.I.M. pool, in the spring. The Arab clerks called her 'the English flower'. She was a little paler than before perhaps, but that fitted her nature. It gave her

~~the~~ ~~a rather~~ tragic look, which she carried more willingly than rude health.

She began leading him across the room to get a drink.

"These are only the left-overs," she murmured, glancing round in her blind way.

"What from?"

"Oh, I gave a party last night!"

He touched Pollocke's bare shoulder as he passed.

"Granville!" ^{Pollocke} ~~he~~ cried, turning round at once with a smile, his chin still lifted, making his beard shine in the light from the window rather like tinsel. "How's tricks?"

"All right! You look well!"

Pollocke laughed in his breathless and silent way, down his nostrils. "You don't look so bad yourself. ~~The~~ Arabian nights ~~appear~~ ^{seem} to suit you!"

Again the girl at his side laughed, giving ^{him} a warm glance. They stood in silence, baffled by each other for a moment, still smiling. He'd always had trouble talking to Pollocke, though at training-school they'd been reasonably good friends. Now Pollocke worked at head office, round the corner in Copthall Avenue.

"How long have you got over here?" Pollocke asked him.

"Two months."

"That's two months for two years, is it?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's not too bad, I suppose. That's on top of what you get out there, is it?"

"I take a week-end or two out there. That's all!" And they laughed with sudden friendliness.

"What happened to your shirt?" Granville asked him.

"Oh---" Pollocke glanced down at his chest. "It's upstairs drying. Some joker poured a double whisky on it."

And again the girl laughed.

"As for my shoes," Pollocke added, "I think they were used as drinking horns!"

His ~~mouth~~ ^{which had an unusual} was quite plump under his beard, bulging a little from his teeth, not characteristic of his lean, pale, austere face at all. His youth was all in his eyes, ^{which} ~~They were~~ friendly and ~~full of~~ good ^{will in them.} ~~faith.~~ That was what had struck Granville first, when they met, in the entrance hall of the school at Reading, with hundreds of other candidates waiting to go in for interviews. Pollocke had joked with him, and they ^{recognised} found a pleasant unconcern in each other. Most of the other candidates looked so tense. ^{He and Pollocke} They'd hit on a certain courage in each other, ^{and there was mutual respect at once.} ~~perhaps, and from the first moment they admired each other.~~

"I haven't seen much of you since training school days," Granville said.

"No. But we ^{can} ~~can't~~ mend that," ^{can't we?}

Pollocke's eyes were even lighter than Pinkie's. But they were steadier ~~than hers.~~ Yet also they were strangely transparent, and abstract like shining steel. They had no real depth, or rather they seemed to have no base behind them. It was like looking into the sky: one was aware of ~~the~~ endless spaces.

Pinkie was pouring him ~~out~~ a drink at the desk and he went across to her again. He kissed her on the cheek and looked at her closely. It was a little against the laws between them, but he risked it. For a moment they were quite alone, their faces close together, and he seemed on the edge of intimacy with her. But in a moment her gaze faltered and she turned away quickly, pretending to be absorbed in getting ~~him~~ ^{the} drink. It was much like flinching, though he preferred not to call it that. ~~to himself.~~ ^{Bagrah} In ~~fact~~ she'd sometimes held her hand involuntarily up to her mouth when he talked, as if ~~she wanted~~ ^{to be} sick. He tended to talk on and on at times. Once on a favourite theme he was difficult to stop, and the words poured out ~~endlessly.~~

Now it was enough for her to be alone with ^{him} a few minutes to feel ^{suffocated!} ~~suffocated~~ ~~suffocated~~ Yet she said nothing about it. He only saw the look on her face as if she wanted to vomit.

On the surface they were such a perfect match. They looked so well together. Her auth^{had} Beatrice always said, "What a fine-looking couple they are!" ^{Who} ~~How many of them~~ could have guessed that ~~Pinkie~~ ^{she Pinkie} was mortally afraid of him?

He took his drink away, making no effort to keep her ^{by} ~~with~~ him. At least the atmosphere was casual and he could sip his drink unnoticed. Pollocke was talking to the girl again, moving heavily from one foot to another, his stick making a dull sound on the carpet.

And his beard was nearly horizontal ~~with the floor~~ as before. ~~Granville~~ ^{Granville} ~~He~~ wanted to laugh. 'It's all a joke!' he thought, ~~so enjoy your~~ ~~self~~ There was Pinkie smiling again in the corner. She had such a quick power of recovery, considering how frail she could be sometimes. Why did he ~~want~~ bring his thoughts bearing down on her all the time? For instance, at this moment, instead of standing there thinking, why didn't he drink a glass of ^{the} ~~the~~ reddish, sticky mixture ^{she'd given him,} with a kick of brandy in it, ~~called a punch~~, and then another, until he was ready to ^{be casual as well?} ~~play the fool?~~ She loved that most of all, when he was a bit tight!

"You're such a sunny person, really," she'd said to him in ^{Bassah} ~~her~~ just before she left. Two years ^{ago} there had altered him somewhat. ^{Why did he give her such black looks sometimes? she wanted to know.} ~~She was making a comparison with his black looks.~~

But ~~that was a small part of the story, really.~~ More often ^{c.c.} than not they were cheerful and affectionate with each other. There was a kind of intimacy between them, in the light of common day, as if they were children. He called her 'calf-nose' and she called him 'little mouse'. They ragged each other ~~constantly~~. They hardly ever had an open quarrel. Only something deadly from the outside

~~was~~ spread its shadow over them, and the shadow ^{had grown} ~~grew~~ in ^{Basrah.} ~~Mosul.~~

It was dull and sultry outside. Perhaps this helped to make ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{guests} ~~people~~ casual. The curtains were ^{still} ~~quite motionless~~. ^{People} ~~They all~~ leaned against the wall or sat on the floor, sipping ^{their drinks.} ~~their drinks~~. The ^{punch} ~~drink~~ took ~~the last of~~ his nervousness away. He ^{felt almost} ~~seemed quite~~ absorbed back into his old life. ^{Only} ~~Or rather~~ His flesh was absorbed ~~back~~ ^{though} not all of him.

He began talking to someone at his side, a plump man in a corduroy suit. He had a jolly face with bloodshot eyes which Granville thought he remembered. It turned out that he ^{also} ~~as well~~ worked at T.I.M., in the public relations office, ~~at Copley Avenue.~~ Pollocke had brought him along.

J. Tals "You've got one of those hot jobs east of the Suez, have you?" ^{this} ~~the~~ man asked ^{him} with a ^{Smile.} ~~friendly laugh~~.

^{Basrah} "Yes, in ~~Mosul.~~"

"I thought so ^{from} the old duck suit. ^{gives 'em away!}"

"Yes, the number of times I've sweated in this," Granville murmured, glancing down at his jacket. "Do you know the Middle East?"

"I pop out to Beirut or Cairo once a year or so, that's all. I prefer the good old patter of English rain. Especially with my tum." He looked at Granville meaningfully, his lips drawn tight. "Ulcers."

"Oh, that's nasty! Are you on a diet?"

"Yes, a foodless one." He laughed ^{again}, wheezing. "Well, fish and pap, you know. The booze is what keeps me going." He held his glass up between ^{plump} ~~his~~ fingers. "This chap's quite an enemy of mine. ~~really~~ If I could rout 'im I'd be all right."

"Well," Granville said, "you'd still have your worries---that's what gives you ulcers, isn't it?"

"How damned right you are!" He looked into Granville's eyes

with a grateful expression. "Mine's the sort of job you never leave. This is the first evening I can call my own for a month or more."

"Really?"

"Oh, Christ, yes--- winging and dining, that's your ~~whomsoever~~ publicity department. Still---" He smiled engagingly. "I wouldn't do it if I didn't get a kick out of it, would I? I say, you and me haven't met, have we? All your stuff goes through Beirut if I'm not mistaken."

^{Barrah}
"Yes. ~~Mosul~~'s just the subsidiary office."

"Nevinson's the boss, isn't he?"

m "Yes, in London."

"That's what I mean. Nice old bugger, Nevinson. Used to be a farmer. No money in that game."

Granville's attention kept wandering back to Pinkie. All of a sudden it struck him as preposterous that she should have given a party the night before his arrival. It hadn't been quite clear to him before. He almost strode across to her indignantly. But he held on to himself, knowing how capable he was of causing a scene.

"You're rather a late arrival, aren't you?" the man asked.

"In what way?" Granville said, wondering if he'd lost the thread.

"Well, you're a day late for the party, I mean."

"Oh, yes! I couldn't get over in time."

"Have you known these good people for long?"

^{Granville}
He paused. "Who?"

The other ^{man} nodded across to Pinkie. "The lady of the house, I mean."

^{Oh!}
"This is my house. That's my wife."

"What?"

The man stared at him and then said, "I say, I'm frightfully sorry! Is old Pinkie really your wife? You could be brother and sister!"

I thought you were much older!"

"Why?" ^{Granville} ~~he~~ smiled in an uncertain way.

itali "Well, from the way old Pinkie talks you'd think you were a sort of funny old boy rather like a professor, if you see what I mean!" And again he burst out laughing. "And here you are like her kid-brother!"

"Awful, the impression our wives give of us, isn't it?" Granville said. *So that was how she talked!*

"Isn't it the end? There's none of 'em knows what we're really like! We're so good and interesting, aren't we, and it's all wasted on them?" He added, "Pinkie was out there with you, of course?"

"Oh, yes! She came ahead to get things fixed up here."

"Excellent use for a wife!"

"You're married as well?" Granville asked him.

"Yes, with three huge kids. All male. They get bigger every day, of course. That's the tendency of kids. You haven't tried them yet?"

"No. I hope to!"

"That's where my fat tum started."

"Three boys, did you say?"

itali "Well, I suppose you'd call them that, yes!" And he said, "Do you know, that was a marvellous party last night? Your wife certainly knows her stuff as far as entertaining people goes. She'd do well in my department."

itali Indignation tugged at him again. She'd done it deliberately! Why wasn't she alone now, even ^{though} ~~if~~ she had ^{given} ~~had~~ a party? They hadn't seen each other for a month! Of course, it was deliberate! Almost turning his back on the publicity-man he gulped down the rest of his drink and pushed his way out of the room, hoping---indeed, expecting

So he plunged out of the room, almost upsetting two of the guests.

without much doubt ---that she would follow him with an anxious expression; ~~on her face~~; she'd never not done so in the past, *after all!*

But he found himself alone in the music-room. And he began to feel a fool! *He hoped not - how!* ~~in the silence~~. Had anyone noticed him going? Pollocke had glanced up suddenly; he'd noticed that. The talk was going on as before. Had even Pinkie noticed? Or was she doing that deliberately as well? Were even their quarrelling-habits, which ~~are some of~~ ^{were} the most intimate habits ~~between~~ ^{could have,} people, to be put aside?

He noticed spots of drink on the carpet, not yet dry. A wild evening from the look of it! The gramophone was still in the corner, apparently unbroken, the records piled on the turntable. And he remembered the whirring noise it made as each record fell into place.

'Well,' he thought to himself, 'now you've got neither a drink nor someone to talk to. You can hardly go back!'

Almost every hour on the boat and then for two whole days in Genoa he'd thought about ~~nothing else but~~ ^{nothing but} her. That was the trouble; ^{his home-coming so elaborately} In his mind he'd arranged the meal they were going to have alone

in the kitchen upstairs, while the sky darkened outside; Then they would go to bed and he would kiss her in earnest for the first time! But underneath he'd been afraid that ~~something like this was going to~~ ^{nothing of the sort would} happen. ~~It had never happened before but it had been in the air for~~ ^{well,} some time. He deserved it, perhaps. But he couldn't ~~think~~ ^{see} clearly why ~~at this moment.~~

A few months before she'd said quite out of the blue, "I'm a completely darned person!" He'd laughed and said all she needed was a child. But he knew there was a warning in what she'd said. It was the only piece of self-criticism he'd ever heard her utter.

Otherwise she flew into a rage ~~if~~ ^{at} any criticism; ~~of her was suggested.~~ ^{it made her feel} She ~~felt~~ cornered and persecuted.

Her remark was caused by her having danced with some of the Arab clerks in the Cabala club by the river. One night she'd gone out alone with one of them---not a clerk exactly but an assistant manager from one of the subsidiary stations in Kurdistan and therefore, technically at any rate, in Granville's employ. People started gossiping about Mr Granville's 'shame'. The men of ~~Mosul~~ ^{Basrah} only showed their wives to trusted friends, and usually on a reciprocal basis even then. Otherwise the poor woman ^{was} ~~was~~ ^{was} hidden away. The story went round the coffee houses not only of ~~Mosul~~ ^{Basrah} but of the whole region, and Kirkuk besides, that Granville was ~~probably~~ a homosexual, ^{and} ~~since he~~ let his wife go free at night. Apparently, his performance with boys was stupendous, ^{they said,} five or six a night and still looking for more when dawn showed through. He pleaded with his wife, they said, to find a good man who'd ^{keep her busy till breakfast-time!} ~~see her through to breakfast.~~ "By Allah," they ^{hurmured} ~~all said~~ in the coffee houses, sucking at their hubble-bubbles, "she has fat and beautiful thighs and the pull of a mare and let us go to the Cabala tonight!" They streamed to the Cabala in their cloaks and bernooses, craning round whenever an Englishwoman entered. This was what Mohammed told him. When ^{Granville} he heard it he rushed back to the house in a fury and shouted at her, "Do you want me to lose my job?" Then for the first time he hit her across the face, and he went on hitting her with a dumb relish that astonished both of them. It was strange how they both seemed spectators of it, in the selfless intimacy of marriage. She even seemed to admire him for it. "It's better than leaving me completely alone," she said by chance one day afterwards. There were bruises all over her face and shoulders, and the clerksx smiled. The coffee houses said he was a flagellist as well, like ^{an} ~~some~~ ^{the} ~~at~~ ^{at} a British Embassy thirty or forty years before who'd surprised his ^{his} ~~his~~ ^{at} boys at night by whipping them and calling

at the same time

out, "Take that, you little bugger, Cunningham!" Cunningham was supposed to be the first boy he'd ever whipped at his public school, as a prefect; and his Arab boys called the flagellation bahgar-kahnin-kham; 'Sahib give me one bahgar-kahnin-kham hard tonight!' they would say.

He knew Pinkie would never forget ^{that beating;} ~~what he'd done,~~ ^{it meant} ~~and that it spelled~~ a change in their relation. ^{The spell was gone.}

After this she went out very seldom and spent hours lying about the house, yearning to be back in London.

Mohammed described the assistant manager as a 'dog and son of a dog,' kelb ibn kelb, in a contemptuous, dusty voice. And Granville told her.

"Oh, well," she murmured, "he danced all right!"

She'd danced him off his feet and then got dead drunk. ^{assistant-manager} The ~~man~~ was delirious with the sheer social triumph of it, ~~though~~ ^{apparently;} ~~Nothing~~ had passed between them. She always said she couldn't bear the touch of a stranger's hands on her body and he ^{felt} ~~knew~~ this was true.

After this, also, she began pleading with him for a child, as if she could see the dangers ahead and wanted a child to prevent them. He was horrified by the idea. This was odd because he loved children, but only other people's children, it seemed. She went on pleading as if to save the marriage, in a ^{1st} effort. She almost pulled him inside her one night, when she had no contraceptives. But he held back, frightened, his muscles quivering with the effort. Then he let himself go. Mentally he knew she was perfectly right, and mentally he wanted children. But his climax was grudging, and there was a certain sadness in her afterwards.

Well, apparently his grudging climax had taken. ^{Radi had the curse} She'd ~~had no period~~ before ^{leaving} ~~she left~~ Basrah.

Just then the young man who'd been at the telephone came into the music-room. He had a small, rather fine face with a pallor so extreme that it seemed even to enter his eyes, though in fact they were dark. His hands were in his pockets. He had masses of black, shining hair and

and a remarkably tiny waist, quite out of proportion to his shoulders, as if he wore corsets. His expression was light and friendly. Everything in his face seemed reserved for the present moment, looking neither back nor forward. And yet, in this devotion to the present there was something opposite, too, a magical element he couldn't describe. There was nothing empty about him. On the contrary, simply his presence fascinated Granville and he stood torn between horror and a blaze of friendship which the other man seemed to be calling forth in him.

They stood gazing at each other. Then they recollected themselves and smiled. The other man stepped aside as Granville walked to the door and said in a parodying tone, "After you, sir!"

Granville began walking up the stairs and the young man called after him, "Where are you off to?"

He turned and watched his friendly smile for a moment. Surely his tone had been mocking? But the smile denied it. Why should a stranger want to mock him? Yet it wasn't mockery either, but a familiarity that knew its object.

"The kitchen," he replied. Then he walked on in confusion. "Just to get some coffee!" He heard the young man walk back with soft steps into the music-room.

He reached the top of the stairs and then, as he caught sight of the kitchen, stepped back in surprise. Every inch of the table was covered with dirty plates, piled up, and where there were no plates there was the refuse of vegetables and meat, looking like vomit. Thrown together on the plates were dirty knives and forks with food crusted all over them, and then cups half-filled with cold tea or coffee or punch. The tall dresser on the right that had always

looked so old-fashioned and neat, reminding him of a Victorian kitchen with its shining ^{blue-printed} plates and scrubbed woodwork, had been cleared of everything clean and its linoleum top was covered with dry porridge oats, sugar and bread crumbs. The drawers were half open and sagging downwards with the sheer weight---balls of string and oil-proof paper bags and cutlery and torn cookery books all mixed together. The sink was swimming with dark-brown greasy water and tea-leaves, and the floor was covered with coffee stains and spilt food. It looked as if an army had passed through. There wasn't a clean saucepan, let alone a cup or saucer! The sugar bowl was empty. He couldn't see the kettle anywhere. That put paid to a cup of tea! He noticed that the spout of the tea-pot had been smashed, leaving a jagged brown mouth. He stood in the middle of it quivering.

And there was a woman in charge here! She called herself a woman! He went on fuming. And if he said anything to her she replied, "Oh, Pip, for God's sake don't be so English!" 'English' apparently meant to-the-point! She needed freedom---for herself, of course. Oh, of course! ^{Freedom!} Yet she'd never done this before, and the quiet knowledge ^{that this was so} was fixed in the back of his mind.

The attic room next door ~~where he'd sometimes slept when he wanted to read late~~ was nearly as bad. The mirror---it had been a full-length mirror hanging by the window, for Pinkie when she was dressing up---lay smashed on the carpet in numberless silver fragments. 'It is deliberate, it is deliberate!' his mind kept repeating while he trembled more and more.

The bed was unmade and there was glass all over the pillow. The chimney-piece was covered with playing cards, dirty cups, half-used candles, ash-trays piled up with cigarette ends. The wardrobe doors---the pleated green curtain behind its glass panels even now giving it an elegant and tranquil look---were hanging open and some of Pinkie's

clothes, her evening gowns and some fancy-dress material, had fallen to the bottom in a heap.)

His trembling ^{grew into} became like a cold shiver. He opened his mouth to yawn and his teeth chattered. He had a dull feeling that his life here was finished. But so quickly, ~~and~~ without warning! What else had he got? An office in ~~Mosul~~ ^{Basra} and Mohammed, who spoke nursery English....

She hadn't followed him up the stairs. She would have done that in the past. She wouldn't refuse to do it now unless she'd made a new world for herself. But he refused this idea. "I'm completely damned!" she'd said. That was it! It was in her flickering gaze. And he was her victim. But even as he trembled and fumed against her he didn't really believe this. It was too neat a ^{thought} ~~piece~~ of ~~dramatisation.~~

Why didn't he do something about it? go downstairs, for instance? But he couldn't!

as he'd often done two years before.

It was still lovely to go to the window and look out, ^{just} Opposite there were roof-tops and the darkening summer sky. From here you could/see the cross on the top of St. Paul's, quite alone, as if it hung from the sky. How silent everything was. Not a sound came from downstairs. He remembered the milk-carts passing in the early morning two years before, with the horses's hoofs making a loud clatter far below as it might have been a century ago when a carriage passed.

He picked some glass off the bed and sat down. There still wasn't a sound anywhere. He watched the ceiling for a moment. It slanted with the roof and the tiny window was cut in to it. They'd spent winter-evenings up here sitting over the gas-fire, drinking coffee. He remembered the red-parchment shade over the light which always made the room glow warmly. There it was, in the

same place, swinging in the light breeze from the window ~~as always before~~. A breeze had started, cool and brief, now that dusk was coming. How sad and barren the sky looked now!

He heard footsteps on the stairs. She was coming! At once the ~~whole~~ absurdity of these events struck him. Of course, things couldn't change so soon! Three or four weeks ago she'd been cooking for him as she'd always done before! Mind you, she'd never been frightfully tidy in the kitchen. But ~~all~~ this ~~present~~ wreckage must be an accident. He felt extraordinarily happy!

However, it wasn't Pinkie. The steps came on to the landing, the boards creaked, then there was silence for a ^{time.} ~~moment~~. He was ~~all~~ all suspense, ^{craving} ~~He turned~~ round. And ^{then he saw} Pollocke's wife ~~was~~ looking down at him.

"Hullo!" she cried.

"Hullo!"

~~He found he could hardly speak.~~ But ~~he~~ jumped up in an effort to hide his state, ^{though he could hardly speak.} He'd had to think for a moment ~~before~~ he recognised her. She'd changed a little. While Pollocke seemed to have become more upright and solid-looking she had dwindled. But then she'd always been rather tiny.

Everything in her face was cleanly marked and steady, especially her eyes, and there was a black fixity in her eyebrows, which were thick and almost met in the middle over her nose. And the line of her hair in front was low, giving her an unusually narrow forehead. She was pretty but in a sharp and detached way, as if the depth in her face couldn't get out. ^{That} ~~All the~~ ^{depth} was in her eyes. They were narrow, Arab eyes, very dusk, and it gave him a brief, painful, ~~quite~~ contradictory nostalgia to look into them as he'd been looking into eyes much the same for the past two years; they were so smoky and dense, smouldering. There was an odd mystical despair ⁱⁿ about them, too.

← She had tight dazzlingly yellow trousers on, with a red jumper that made her breasts look hard and sharp, like armour. She always went in for bright colours. She put out her hand in a humble way and he grasped it, remembering her Christian name just in time.

"How are you, Hanni? I didn't see you downstairs!"

"I was in the corner. I waved!"

"I wondered if you were there!"

"Come and sit down," he added. [But she stood by the door awkwardly.

"Can't I get you a drink or something?" she asked, still gazing at him. He began to think his state was visible to her.

"Why? What's the matter?" He laughed.

"Nothing!" She shook her head and sat down quickly on a pouf by the bed. "I'm dreaming! We didn't get a wink of sleep last night!"

"I heard it was a good party!"

"Oh, yes!"

One could see the Assyrian in her still. Her hair was a ~~much~~ ^{colour} lighter ~~brown~~ than her eyebrows and she tried to eliminate its stiff crinkles by wearing it straight down to her shoulders, heavily-oiled, so that the fixity of her features was emphasised even more. And the desert was still there at the back of her eyes, undeniably, though her face ~~seemed to~~ ^{was} set to hide it. Her mouth always had a ~~rather~~ guarded and tense look, ~~as if she was trying to make it as thin as possible.~~ Eyebrows meeting in the middle was supposed to mean a quick temper but she remembered her as a mild, ^{person.} and quiet ~~girl.~~ ^{in and e} But perhaps there was a quick flame ~~behind~~ her stillness. Pollocke had called her 'the bear' ~~once~~ at training school, when she came down for a visit, before they were married. A quick movement seemed

down;
physically impossible for her, as if she was rooted ~~there~~ yet she
was slim and agile and had a girl's small-hipped body and upright
breasts. She ^{feared being 'heavy'} ~~hated the suggestion that she had any of the heaviness~~
^{like} of the Arab women, ^{He remembered that, too.} ~~she'd known as a child.~~

"Did you have a good trip?" she asked, gazing at him with her
dusky, reflective eyes.

"Yes, it was marvellous on the boat. Lovely weather." Then
he said in a sudden mood of impatience, "I wish we could get rid of
all these people!"

She gazed at him again. "It isn't a very good welcome home,
is it?" And she smiled. "Shall I try and get rid of them for you?"

"Oh, no!"

He felt easier for her sympathy and leaned back, but he was still
trembling. She ought to have been a nurse, ^{he thought} He remembered how she
used to send methodical little parcels to Pollocke at the training
school, with instructions that he must share the cake with Granville. ^{But}
He remembered her kindness as an intellectual event; it hadn't really
left a mark on him. He couldn't think why this was so. He'd always
had trouble remembering her Christian name as if her real self was
absent to him. Perhaps it was because he and Pollocke hadn't become
friends after all. Yet the conditions of friendship had seemed to
be there.

"Let me get you a drink, really," she murmured, getting up again.
"It'll make you feel better."

There was ^{such} ~~such~~ a strange atmosphere between them, in the silence
of ^{this} ~~the~~ attic-floor, as if they were both refugees from the other
people below.

"All right, then!" he cried.

When she got to the door she turned round and said in her
pursed and restricted way, "I said to Dick they ought to have been

sent packing this afternoon. But Pinkie said you wouldn't mind."

"Oh!" He laughed to suggest a comic audacity on Pinkie's part.

Many minutes ^{went by} ~~passed~~ after she left the room. So it seemed.

It was growing dark now and fewer cars were passing in the distance.

His tropical suit shone white in the darkness and his hands looked

almost black by comparison. He began to wonder if she was going to

stay downstairs after all. Once among them again she might forget

him, ^{— she was flattered by people's attention. —} ~~There was perhaps an element of approval-seeking in her, he didn't know.~~

He loomed on the bed feeling terribly neglected and

sorry for himself. What a home-coming! He refused to lose sight

of the form of the thing. He'd worked out the form of ^{Pinkie's} ~~her~~ welcome

so carefully. A hundred times he'd sat at the kitchen table with

her in the dusk, sharing observations about what it felt like to be

back in England, ^{ital} again!

He heard Hanni's footsteps on the stairs and realised she hadn't been away more than two or three minutes---time enough only to pour the drinks. In the distance, far away, perhaps in Commercial Road, a bus passed with a swishing noise like a sudden wind, then died as quickly.

She came up slowly and he could hear the tinkle of ice in a glass.

"Here we are," she said. With her free hand she switched on the light~~s~~ and the room suddenly glowed, reminding him of the existence of the carpet, which was red and had originally been in his bedroom. It was faded now. He knew the old stains on it.

"God," he said, nodding towards the smashed mirror, "that's a hell of a mess, isn't it?"

"Yes, it fell off the wall." She blinked and he wondered if it was the truth.

"Fell off?"

"Well, it wasn't nailed on properly, I suppose."

"It was never nailed. I screwed it on myself."

She put his drink down on a little table by the bed, her face averted.

"You look so healthy, Philip," she said, looking down at him with a smile. "This is really the tail-end of ^{the} a party."

"Yes, Pinkie told me."

"It went on for about three days?"

"Three days? I thought it was only last night!" He trembled more but took pains to hide ^{it}, clegnching his ^{teeth} ~~jaw~~ together. Yes, Pinkie was going to leave him!

Yes "Well, you know!" She laughed in her shy and fixed way. "Pinkie took a time to work up to it! We came in and helped get the punch ready and all that."

"I wonder why she couldn't wait until I got back?"

"She said you had to stay in Genoa."

"Yes, so I did!" He said it as if it had suddenly occurred to him, so as to cover Pinkie.

"What do you think of Dick without his shirt?"

"I was absolutely astonished when I came in the room! I wondered what on earth was happening!"

"Somebody poured whisky ^{all over him} ~~down his shirt~~."

"Yes, he told me."

She smiled again. "I don't think he enjoyed the party very much."

"Why not?"

"Well, I got rather drunk and came up here to sleep it off and some man crawled in ^{to} bed after me, some awful, pot-bellied little man! I was too drunk to do anything about it and he fell asleep!"

He laughed nervously, his mouth dry. The story didn't fit her. She was telling ^{it} out of bravado for some reason. She was trying

to be smart and off-hand and this was against her ~~simple~~, intimate nature.

"Dick came up about two in the morning and found him there, right on top of me, snoring away! He said, 'I say, do you mind, this is my bed!' But the horrid little man was fast asleep!" She spluttered with laughter.

"What happened, then?"

"Oh, poor old Dick walked the streets all night." *He threatened to kill the man but he didn't touch him, of course!*

Poor old Dick
Pollocke didn't believe in violence. He'd ~~gone into the~~ ^{once} ~~Intelligence in the war and~~ told Granville ~~at the Reading Training~~ ^{gun in the war} ~~school~~ that if he'd been asked to fire a ~~shot~~ ^{bullet}, he would have refused.

There was silence for a time and Hanni said, "Pinkie seems to have had a lovely time in ~~Moscow~~ ^{Baron}."

"Yes, I think it suited her." He added, ~~"What about you, Hanni?"~~
~~You look a bit fed-up."~~

~~"Oh, I'm tired, that's all."~~

"How's Dick doing at T.I.M.?"

"Oh, you know he'll be head of the section soon, do you?"

"Really? So he'll be getting a bigger screw?"

"Well, a bit. Of course we spend ~~most of it~~ ^{such a lot} on fares!"
We're still down at Hampton Court, believe it or not!"

~~"Really?"~~

Hampton Court

~~This~~ ^{than her and Dick} had always been a source of trouble between ~~her and Dick~~.
It had started before they were married. ^{Dick ~~found~~ ^{had} ~~these~~} ~~He~~ found a flat ~~at Hampton~~ ^{these} ~~Court~~ overlooking the river and, ^{following} ~~obeying~~ a whim ~~which~~ ^{really} she never understood, ~~he~~ took it on a long contract. He thought the view from the window was the finest he'd ever seen. It was certainly ^{nice} ~~wonderful~~ in the evening when the shadows were long and sometimes ~~geese~~ ^{swans} flew above ~~along~~ the water, straight-necked, making a powerful throbbing noise with their wings like a machine in the air. The flat itself was

Granville remembered —

hideous. Every room was on a different level, one step up or one step down, and frightfully dark with cavernous ceilings that drew all the warmth. The kitchen was little bigger than a cupboard and the bath was a sit-up affair in the scullery. There wasn't enough pressure in the taps to ^{put} be 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 with a flourish. He ^{didn't seem} ~~was~~ hardly aware of the inconveniences.

"The journey back in the evening seems to take longer every day," she said.

~~"But what's his objection to a place in town?"~~

~~She shrugged. "We stayed here a night or two while you were still in Mosul and he was kicking."~~ ^{as happy as a lark.} This is the sort of ^{ital} ~~place~~ 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 ^{if} phone me to say he wasn't coming ~~if~~ we had ^{ital} 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 rumb bird, isn't he? What's he afraid of exactly?"

"I don't know." ^{Comfort, I suppose!} ~~He doesn't seem to want to be comfortable.~~ ^{He's afraid of comfort.} He might get fat and boring. Having flat a ~~family~~ would put him on the road to having a family, you see.

And that'd pin him down frightfully. What a fool ^{he} Dick 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 ~~also~~ 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 ^{Barrak,} ^{her birthplace wasn't} Mosul, though ~~she'd been born not~~ two hundred miles ^{away} ~~from it~~. ^{And} She spoke Arabic fluently.

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 ^{he guests began} ~~they started~~ leaving downstairs. The cars outside started up, making an unholy roar in the narrow street. And ^{Hanni} ~~Stana~~ rose, having unconsciously performed her role of ^{nurse} ~~nurse~~.

"I'll go and collect Dick," she murmured. "He seemed to be making good weather with his schoolgirl, don't you think?"

"He did rather!" He laughed, ^{almost} ~~quite~~ himself again now. "Is she a schoolgirl?"

"Oh, a model or something!"

As they went to the door he said, ^{overlooking} ~~forgetting~~ the reticence she liked to keep on the subject, "What sort of people do you interpret for, Hanni? Big oil-sheikhs and that sort of thing?"

"Not exactly," she murmured. And that was all.

"Come and see us in Hampton Court," she added 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
footsteps on the stairs. ^{There,} ~~Ah,~~ everything was all right after all!

End 1) Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 2.

~~Chapter 2.~~STC V
Chapter 2.

Kgothar

But now they were alone ~~in the house~~ he didn't want to address her. That was ^{the} ~~a~~ pattern between them. He sat on in the attic room in the darkness, for Hanni had involuntarily switched the light off again when she went, while Pinkie cleared up downstairs. 'She must realise what she's done!' he ^{had himself} ~~thought.~~ ~~Otherwise their relation wasn't worthwhile.~~ But she rarely did realise. She hadn't thought anything of dancing with a clerk from Kurdistan, apparently! ~~But then, perhaps, neither had he in his heart of hearts. It was the form he was interested in. This form meant an unspoken trust and intimacy between them that survived in public.~~ But, as she'd said to him one evening in ^{Barral} ~~Mosul~~ ~~Mosul~~, "I'm not perfect, darling. Don't expect such a terrific lot from me, please!"

But he couldn't face ~~the idea of~~ a casual relation. He could go downstairs now, for instance, and chuck her under the chin and have another drink, make a joke of it; and ~~then~~ ^{probably} the matter would ~~no doubt~~ heal itself. It was what he actually wanted to do, with all his heart. But he couldn't.)

^{n.p.} ~~After~~ ^{quarrel;} there would be a ~~clash~~ ^{quarrel;} between them, a sudden rash word followed by tears, ~~perhaps~~. (Then) ~~he~~ ⁱⁿ would pour everything out in a long speech, going ^{to} the whys and wherefores of her errors and sometimes, though more rarely, ^{the whys and wherefores of} his own, ~~as~~ ^{while} he strode up and down the

room gesticulating, a glare splitting his brow, his shoulders hunched up a little ^{like someone} ~~as if he was~~ trying to force his way into a tunnel ~~or something~~. This was what Pollocke had called his 'orang-utang' approach. The theme would be moral: what their lives ought to be like together. Meanwhile her eyes would begin to flicker more and more and she would stifle a yawn. His words would make her feel ~~frightfully suffocated~~, ~~They were~~ like great padded doors closing in her face, stopping the light and air, ~~and cutting her off from the real world where people moved about and did things~~. Once launched on a theme he was beyond recall and she could only get relief by bursting into tears.

He heard her pulling his desk back into place ^{downstairs}, straining at it and gasping loudly. This was part of a demonstration, no doubt! She was showing him how he'd ruined everything by making her guests feel he didn't want them in the house; ^{will be} ~~She was getting everything~~ back in order, ^{son? he was saying, just bloody you do all your} ~~especially his precious desk where he had all his~~ ^{thinking!} ~~precious thoughts that seemed so important to him~~. And then, when the orders ^{re-} ~~were~~ established ~~again~~ and every damned boring piece of furniture ^{is} ~~was~~ back in its place ^{we'll} ~~they'd~~ sit and stare at each other ^{as usual;} what a bore! ~~The way she talked.~~ But he was rather bucked that she was making ^{the} a gesture at all; it showed he was in her mind. ^{The desk bumped and rumbled below.} ~~somewhere or other.~~ ^{Quite a relief!} ~~So everything was all right.~~ They were being beastly to each other on known lines!

The last month ^{in Barral} ~~had been~~ ghastly ~~and wretched without her.~~ ^{Barral} There'd been little work at the office and in any case life ~~in Mosul~~ ^{here} stopped at eleven in the morning ^{in the last months.} ~~during summer~~. The swimming pool had been closed suddenly because of an outbreak of polio among the English and Americans. ^{Barral} ~~Mosul~~ was an ugly, stifling city full of dust and sand, little more than a settlement of shacks and jerry-built shops two storeys

high with crumbling fronts. A main street, crowded and full of pot-holes, ran straight from the Southern Gate to the Northern, and in that street you had more or less the whole city. Beyond it lay the endless flat desert. The only good-looking things were the old Turkish houses, ornate and wooden, with intimate little balconies, by the river. Little alleyways ran between these houses down to the river's muddy banks and when the heat got under way they stank ~~like~~ ^{like} ~~fully~~ ^{sewer,} ~~fully~~. It was all clatter and bustle in the centre of the town--- cars^s nose-to-tail sounding their horns in a constant massive orchestra, street-boys with little trays of chewing gum or chocolate shouting and running after you, mules stumbling between the ruts and holes in the pavement, blaring calls-to-prayer relayed by loudspeaker from the mosques, and screeching radios in the coffee houses. Old men would sit for hours in these coffee houses staring before them and smoking their hubble-bubbles; ~~some with~~ ^{you could see} the desert ~~stare~~ in their eyes.

The sweat used to collect at the base of his neck and make a nasty raw rash which he dabbed with a handkerchief, making it worse and worse until it bled. He couldn't sleep at night and spent much of his time in the Mesopotamia Hotel under the fans. He got absurdly nervous in the last month about the possibility of a riot, though it wasn't the season for riots, which happened when the colleges were assembled. He went round the house checking on the doors and windows to see if they were fast, several times a night, and rather than risk somebody getting in at his window he stifled with it closed until dawn. He went into savage tempers at the office. The night-wind from the desert had a strange touch for him. He kept hearing imaginary voices outside, and when he looked out of his bedroom-window---his house was in the 'green' district, where most of the consular houses were, spaced far apart---he thought he could see figures in dishdashas darting

He imagined her naked with full, round, heavy breasts, her nipples sharp and darkly red, swollen, while her eyes were closed, her mouth open, her hips seeming massive, moving...

through the shadows of the palm trees. He knew, logically, that Mohammed, being a nationalist like most of the other clerks, would know how to protect him in a riot. Indeed, he already had protected him. He'd walked into the Mesopotamia Hotel the year before during a stiff student-riot, while stones were being flung through the window, and ~~soberly~~ coolly taken him out to his broken-down Citroen in the main street under the eyes of the students. In any case, the crowds rarely attacked Europeans. Their target was the king and his ministers. Granville ~~realized these fears were a kind of sickness;~~ /his only relief ~~was~~ ^{had been was} thinking about Pinkie, and he'd spent hours alone at night, even avoiding Mohammed, to be alone with her image, in a state of half-collapse. It was a cool, voluptuous image and it kept him going. He wrote to her that he'd be spending a week in Genoa on his way back, but he hurried on after only two days there and sent her a sudden telegram from Paris.

There was nothing in common between her body and that of the image. It was an image of her body, yes - but she wasn't doing any of the things he'd look in mind for her.

~~nothing in common between her body and that of the image. It was an image of her body, yes - but she wasn't doing any of the things he'd look in mind for her.~~

^{rupture} was made ^{saner},
The image ~~had been reduced to sounder proportions~~, like his rash,
by the healthy sea-voyage from Beirut, but still it held his mind.
And now, in London, it seemed to have nothing to do with her.

She came upstairs and switched the light on, not realising he was there. At once he jumped up. Her hair was tumbled, presumably from her efforts with the desk, and she was wearing her tragic look.

"Good God!" he shouted, ^{suddenly} fury/ ~~getting~~ the better of him, "there's ^{this} ~~an~~ unholy bloody mess, isn't there?"

At once his chin was thrust forward, his shoulders ^{were} hunched, his eyes glared blackly towards her. ~~And he~~ hadn't consciously intended the words ~~he addressed to her~~ at all! They sounded distant to him and it occurred to him even as he stood there that their construction, grammatically, was strange.

^{she screamed back,}
"What the hell are you talking about?" ~~she replied, also shouting at the top of her voice.~~

The clash had started.

"Well, Jesus Christ---! Fancy coming back to this!"

This time she didn't cry. He was a little disappointed. Instead she walked across the room and flung the attic-window up, then, to his amazement, brought in a kettle from off the roof. He wanted to laugh but his face was set with grim condemnation.

"You haven't seen the lid of this, by any chance, have you?" she asked, with equally ridiculous grimness, holding the lidless kettle in her hand.

"No, I ~~haven't~~!"

She went next door and he heard her light the gas. Then she came back.

"I suppose you want a cup of tea?" she asked.

But he flung past her without a word: ~~and went downstairs.~~ she'd given him something to refuse, ~~and he'd leapt at the chance.~~ Didn't

His first real look at the house, now that it was quiet. 41.

she realise how awful it was coming back to this? ^{he asked himself.} But at the same time his mind was baffled. He couldn't quite tell what his feelings were. He was keeping something up deliberately; he really wanted to call her 'calf-nose' and have a cup of tea. *He went down stairs to have*

His bags were still in the music-room where he'd dropped them near the hearth and he opened the first one, meaning to ^{unpack}. But he was too nervous to do it. He walked into the bedroom and stood there for some time, letting the quiet sink into him. She'd made the room more or less presentable. There was still no bed, however. The tasselled bed-cover, coloured a sm^ob^{re} mauve, was lying on the floor. It was strange to stand there without the guests and yet feel their presence still warm in the air. Their voices hadn't quite left the room. He believed he really had sent them away and they wouldn't come back even for Pinkie.

He looked at the grey carpet covering every inch of the floor. He was proud of that, having ~~it~~ laid it himself. It gave him a great sense of luxury. ~~And~~ ^{his} desk was painted a light sea-blue. He'd done that as well. He went to one of the wardrobes let into the wall and found some of his old winter suits, heavy and dusty. He hadn't cared much about clothes two years before, to judge ^{from} ~~by~~ the look of them. The trousers were out at the knee and the pockets sagged. There was a pair of simply massive walking shoes with crêpe soles, out of question for ^{Dinah} ~~Mesuli~~.

The curtains were lovely, a delicate rose-coloured pattern of tall trees ^{with} and a still monkey ^{sitting in} among the branches. ^{This} ~~The~~ monkey had a flat, melancholy face wrinkled by the curtain's folds, and it stared out into the room, moving sometimes with the breeze. ^{The} ~~These~~ curtains had come to Pinkie from a grandmother and had originally been at Aldercote, the Grysham home fifty years before. At the bottom they were in shreds and had yellowed. But the rose ^{colour} had become more and

more delicate. New linings had been sewn on again and again.

A breeze came in from the window like a promise of excitement--- a cool, tender, secretive breath across his face. It made him shudder, he didn't know whether with excitement or fear. 'Why not let things go?' he thought. 'Why insist so much?' Let him go to parties, take a girl dancing. Why not? Let all the forms collapse!

It reminded him of another breeze, on the night of an eclipse three months before in Basrah. He'd stayed awake all night thinking things out in the way he'd always promised himself he would. In the morning after that long night of thought he saw everything clearly, gleaming and ice-cool. An ambition of his life had been fulfilled.

Pinkie knew nothing about that night. She seemed to see no change in him. He said nothing, ~~feeling that the~~ telling ^{her about} ~~of~~ ^{night} it would take away some of his certainty; he wanted to let it lie dormant for a time. In any case, though she was curious about his thoughts and followed his long arguments with an intrigued expression, from ~~a far~~ ^{a distance} with a hint of love despite herself, ~~ultimately~~ ^{in the end} they made her yawn.

^{This} It had crushed their marriage, ~~this~~ ^{really}. Ever since he could remember he'd had a problem beating at his brain for which everything must wait. 'If only I could reach a solution,' he always told himself, 'then my life would change, then I could behave normally!' It got so bad in Basrah that he gave up inviting people, even business-friends. Grudgingly he went to a film with her once a month. When he did go out to a party or a dance with her it was on a kind of insurance-basis: ^{it} she would ~~be kept~~ ^{keep her} quiet for a time. In the end he lost his patience with her endless, "Pip, why don't we go out somewhere?" He told her to clear out and find a 'bloody dancing partner' somewhere, which she did!

One day, of course, he and Pinkie would be going out together all

the time.' Oh, yes, later they'd be out every night! He'd be carefree! For he was hurting himself as well. He actually wanted to go out. He loved dancing with her and seeing her contented smile. ~~at a party.~~ She was so easily pleased. She only wanted him to be light-hearted a few hours every day and she knew it was a desire ~~also~~ ^{as well} in him that he was holding back. The mark of a frown was getting deeper and deeper on his brow every day. Why? She couldn't understand it.

"You're such a sunny person, really!" she said. "Why do you have to be like this?"

It was the same over her little demonstrations of affection. She made to kiss him or stroke his hair and at once he ducked away. Another time, another time! But meanwhile he had to think things out.

As for having children, well, of course, one day he'd be ready for them! He'd be strong enough to take on fatherhood: but he didn't want to propagate his seed until he'd thought things out; he couldn't feel whole until he'd done so. ~~This wasn't a wilfulness in him: it was a true state he was simply powerless to alter.~~

On the other hand, he didn't tell her this in so many words. ~~He never said he wanted to think things out. He never said he wanted to think things out.~~ ^{He never said he wanted to think things out.} He wasn't sufficiently aware of ~~the~~ ^{his} wanting to. ~~clear in his own mind that he wanted to.~~ ^{So} And she became more and more baffled. The lost look in her eyes grew. ~~And~~ ^{At} last her sexual interest died as well. That was the flower he'd been clever enough to crush!

'Why do you ~~hate~~ ^{love} people?'---this was always on her lips. ~~Since childhood~~ ^{new} She'd always felt vaguely starved of life. She wanted lots of people round her, and he wasn't quite the person for that. ~~At least, he was in his nature but not in what he chose as his destiny.~~ ^{At least, he was in his nature but not in what he chose as his destiny.} ~~his destiny, and she saw the contradiction.~~ Her childhood had been

576 *l.c.* ^{lonely.} ~~been rather lonely.~~ ^{specific hours} She'd ~~been too much~~ alone with a strict nurse^{on whom age was telling.} Her brothers and sisters, eight of them, ^{had} ~~tended to neglect~~ her ^{as} ~~because she was~~ the youngest; they had ^{already} ~~already~~ formed their clubs. ^{she told him once that} And ~~so she began to think of~~ being alone as a state of sin and shame. ^{for her.} It meant you were disliked by other people. ^{And she thought that being alone meant the same in ~~her~~ him - a state of shame!} ~~And she thought now that there was some shame in Granville that wouldn't allow him to go out to other people.~~ ^{And} He saw her looking at him with doubt sometimes, feeling shame on his account.

The silence of his room froze her and took her back to the long, empty days of childhood. If they were alone together for long she felt imprisoned and suffocated, ^{as after} as she'd done as a child after too long in an overheated nursery ^{Barak} and too big a meal. The more she asked him to take her out in ~~his~~ the more he resisted, in a fight to keep his privacy. The seige and the attack became their pattern. It was now a convention between them that she pulled in one direction ^{he} and/in the other, whatever their real desires were. She insisted on going out even when she felt tired and ill, and he ~~insisted on~~ staying ^{ed} at home when he was ~~really~~ dying to see other people. Nor did she really think he hated people: it had simply become part of the convention between them to say so. On his side he said she was afraid to be alone, and this was equally untrue. She loved tucking herself into bed at night with a book and a glass of hot chocolate. But since their marriage she'd rarely done it.

^{Barak} All this came to a climax in ~~his~~ for the simple reason that men were divided socially from women, except in ~~very~~ advanced ~~or very~~ ~~stilly~~ circles. There were times when he genuinely couldn't take her out---to the house of a sheikh with whom he had business connections, for instance, or to the cabaret where ^{the whores were picked up.} ~~these sheikhs sometimes~~ ~~liked to go and get rid of their vulgarity in the company of whores.~~

Nor could she go about the city alone, much less sit in one of the cafés, even the most elegant of them. Even carrying a shopping bag down the main street was 'shame' in the eyes of the sheikh-class. It had to be done by a servant, who followed you at a distance. Gradually she began to put the blame for this state of affairs on him, rather as if he'd invented ~~the structure of~~ Muslim society. And in an absurd way he did feel responsible for it. His career meant loneliness for her; this was becoming her theme. And it was difficult to deny it.

But really not even going out satisfied her. It was something more difficult. At first, in Basrah, they'd gone out quite a lot, making a round of the cinemas where one sat in open boxes rather like stables, protected against the ye^{even}ling crowd; or ^{they went to} attending company dinners and ^{ed} organising them. There'd been numberless parties, some of them casual and others at the Embassy; there was a lot to choose from because everybody was lonely. But still she felt swindled. The empty house still waited for them when they got back; and she dreamed of London, where she could leave the front door open all day, and all sorts of people drifted in. The house in Basrah waited for them after a party like a grim destiny claiming them back. Nobody in Basrah called without special invitation. "What a stuffy lot of buggers they all are!" she cried.

Most of the parties were solemn affairs, too. The guests sat round the wall c^{licking} their beads in silence, smiling at each other now and then, divided from their neighbours by a little table on which ^{were} ~~had been~~ placed a bowl of nuts, a glass of brandy and an ash-tray with water in it that sent up a stink of sodden ^{Tobacco,} ~~ashes.~~ Mohamm-

ed's parties were like this, and Granville tried to persuade him not to give them. There would ^{be} semi-westernised Arab music from Cairo, and everybody would say, "Willah, Allah!" with ^a ecstasy when the famous Makboul started singing. Pinkie would yawn until ^{came.} ~~the~~ tears were ~~in her eyes~~.

g.c. ^{And} When he did get to know people he became friends with them in a man's way which she couldn't share. That was another of her complaints. Mohammed was a good example. And evening with him was agony for her; she would rather have one of his parties. "No more talk-and-beads for me!" One had to be doing something, dancing or playing cards or talking to new people. She couldn't bear Mohammed's silences. To please ^{her} he took her ^{the high-class cabaret for Europeans,} to the Cabala about once a month, but always there was a sense of swindling. The evenings were too planned, ^{Pinkie seemed to say,} whereas if they ^{had} lived in a lively group of people there wouldn't ^{have been} be any need to plan things. But he couldn't think properly with lots of people round him! He had to be alone for hours on end, and he wanted the free run of the house. Sometimes she gave him two hours after lunch to be alone, and this made him feel swindled on his side because his thoughts refused to come according to a ^h schedule.

They had a persistent destructive effect on each other's freedom.

^{Barrak} In ~~Mosul~~ there were a number of English women married to Arab architects or doctors or engineers, who also wanted a casual life free from the ~~abound~~ obsession with 'shame' among the corrupt and powerful. And there were Arab and Kurdish students who'd been to American or English colleges and seen beyond the veil. One girl, the daughter of a police official, wore a tight jumper with the word WISCONSIN knitted across it, and never wore the abba; since the Kurdish women wore no veil there was already a precedent for the Arab women not to do so. This meant there were opportunities for Pinkie; and a circle did start up. But as always Granville held back.

The rooms were large, and there were terraces, even a lawn, though the grass was brown and patchy.

He could have given wonderful parties in the house. He knew it.

And girls / The young women in the circle were graceful and pretty. It was

easy to talk to the men. They were a great relaxation from the shekhs. Sometimes they all went off together for a picnic in the desert or on longer trips to Babylon and the arch of Tesiphon, which the Wisconsin girl climbed, to everybody's horror; she stood on the peak of the immense broken arch gazing down at them. And there were fires on the lawn at night, and buffet suppers inside chic, gleaming rooms with fitted carpets and polished wooden furniture from Scandinavia, and abstract paintings on the walls. But it was too much of

a drug for him. He could have lived like that, all the time. But everything else in his life would have collapsed. Sometimes he yearned

to let everything go, in a delicious, haphazard flow of life, talking to people all the time, wandering and lolling about, dancing and joking, and suddenly taking a drive across the desert to an

encampment where they would dance for one all night, the women with golden plate-like ornaments on their breasts which they made to revolve inwards on each other in a most seductive way. And he would do the routine work at the office, no more. He could live like that till the end of his days. But then his other life asserted itself.

But After a time he couldn't bear the feeling of being dispersed from his real self.

after too much company. With Mohammed it was different: talk followed themes slowly and coolly. But with other people he felt drawn too much into the present reality. And he was searching all the time for the underneath-reality. They broke this underneath-reality in him, and the effect was both delightful and shocking.

Pinkie gave in. She saw with a growing sadness that everything in him that was attractive to other people would be allowed to go to ruin. And she made this clear to her for the first time. She'd always had the humble idea, before, that he might be leading her some-

where, with a bit of unhappiness at first, but not for long. Now it wasn't true. That took her strength away. She began to lean on him more and more. The more he tried to be alone the more she clung to him, and he felt he was expected to live her life as well as his own. She refused to be independent---she could only conceive that as being in revolt against him. Decisions were left to him---whom to invite, where to go, the letters they should write. He won absolute iron control of her without wanting to. She leaned on him for her whole life. He was her initiative, her morality, her judge. So she never left him really free for his work. There was always a part of him lurking in her, in another room, a responsibility that nagged and tugged at him: yet if he went next door, if he gave up his afternoon, he knew he wouldn't be able to give himself, all his passions and his uncurbed, flowing self; ~~so~~ so he never could give his afternoons, or anything else, to her; she only wanted an element of him, which meant distortion of all his other self. He stayed hammering away at his work even when he didn't want to, and even when there wasn't any real work to do; he became more and more entrenched, because the first condition of intimacy, the right of absolute self-abandon, couldn't be fulfilled; and correspondingly, she wilted and faded before his sight, day by day, in the enormous Basrah heat, because she was suffering exactly the same thing. She started calling him 'po-faced', a 'parson'---and he felt a new pale alter ego growing, which he hated, too.

where, ^{with} involving a ^{bit of} little unhappiness at first, ~~perhaps~~, but not for long. Now ~~she felt~~ it wasn't true. That took her strength away. She began to lean on him more and more. The more he tried to be alone the more she clung to him, and he felt he was expected to live her life as well as his own. She refused to be independent. Decisions were left to him---whom to invite, where to go, the letters they should write. He ~~had~~ won absolute iron control of her ^{without wanting to} ~~against his will~~.

She stood in the doorway of the music-room and he started ^{out of} ~~from~~ his thoughts. He hadn't heard her come downstairs!

"Have you brought the lemons?" she asked, her eyes turned away from him. Her hair was still down over her brow, and her eyes had lost all the curiosity and light he'd seen in them at the party not an hour before. Yet she was such an easy person to rally. He only had to say an encouraging word and she would smile! But he couldn't bring himself to do it. For God's sake, why couldn't he let go?

"Yes," he replied waveringly, "I'll get them!"

A fortnight before, in her only letter, she'd asked him to bring some lemons for halmuth tea from Basrah. They were tiny, shrivelled, sun-blackened lemons that one put into the tea-pot. He took them out of his case and handed them to her, three of them in tissue paper.

"Thank you," she said in a haughty tone, and ^{he} went on fiddling about with his case in an embarrassed way. He knew a storm was brewing. She was gazing at a point half-way between them ^{on} the floor, as always when she was angry, and her hair was down over her right eye, giving her a childish, pouting look. She went on addressing the point on the floor: "And now do you mind

telling me^{what} what you meant by walking out of my party like that?"

She made him feel ^{terribly} frightfully like a servant on these occasions. He still had his head in his case, rummaging round, and ^{dared not} ~~dare not~~ look up at her in case he got a swipe in the eye. It had happened before. He could feel her gaze fixed haughtily on his back and he had an absurd desire to ~~burst out~~ ^{laughing} ~~giggling~~ → giggle.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Are you deaf? I said would you mind telling me why you tried to make a fool of me at my own party?" She added, "Make a fool of me in front of my guests!"

The words 'my guests' gave her a terrific grandeur and he turned round to look at her out of a simple objective curiosity to see her expression. Her eyebrows were raised, her cheeks were flushed and her chin was pushed forward.

"I don't know---" His voice sounded quite trivial. "I thought we were going to have dinner together---"

"What on earth are you talking about?" she cried. "I only got your telegram yesterday!"

"That doesn't stop you---" He was still crouched foolishly over his case.

"What do you mean, it doesn't stop me? Do you think I'm bloody-well going to cancel all my plans just because you take it into your head to come a few days earlier?"

"No, but---"

"Do you think I've got nothing better to do than stand around here waiting for your next orders?"

"I didn't say that." He was completely at a loss for an argument.

"Did you or did you not tell me you were staying a week in

Genoa?"

Her eyes blazed at him and he ^{was afraid} ~~feared~~ she might get into one of her frantic states when she gritted her teeth and screamed.

"Yes, Pinkie, I did---" He added gingerly, "It's all right---"

She stopped. "What's all right, you bloody fool?"

"Well, I was wrong."

"Oh, I see! So it was all for nothing, was it?"

"What?"

"Ruining my party!"

"Oh, come on, your party was last night."

She was already placated. He could tell that from her eyes. The moment he ^{had} said he was wrong all the defiance ^{had} left her.

"Why do you always do that?" she said with sudden tears in her ~~water~~ eyes. Her face was screwed up pitifully. "Why do you always have to ruin things?"

He shrugged. "I don't know." He gazed down at his case as if he was really trying to think about it. "Don't cry, Pinkie!"

"I wanted you to be at this party," she said. The tears began pouring down her face and he got up.

"Pinkie..." He put his arms round her and they stood close to each other in an awkward way while she gasped and cried.

"How did I know you were coming back?" she whispered.

"I'm sorry, Pinkie."

He pulled her head gently on to his shoulder and looked across at the window. How forlorn they were! Her little gasps broke into the silence. She gave him affectionate little punches in the side while she wept, saying, "Oh, Pip!" with the ~~she~~ ^{she} helplessness of the situation. He could feel her ^{cool} ~~bare~~ shoulder against him, and her ^{wet} ~~her~~ cheeks.

"It always seems to happen like ~~x~~ this, doesn't it?" he said.

"I mean, when we've been away from each other?"

"Yes!" she said, and her tears increased.

"Don't cry any more!" He was completely sunk at the sound of ~~her~~ tears and swore not to find fault with her again. There was something so ~~absolutely~~ ^{a kind of final} desperate and final about ~~her tears~~ ^{the way she cried}, like the stillness of ~~total~~ ^{a kind of final} destruction ~~on~~ ^{on} things; ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} anything, ~~else~~ ^{including his own submission, was preferable} ^{better} than that!

This time he didn't make a long 'orang-utang' speech. He watched the fixed, identical roofs on the other side of the road, ~~while~~ ^{circle} with a ~~ring~~ ^{circle} of lamplight like shining dust ~~coming up~~ ^{glowed} from the street below.

"Let's go up and cook something, shall we?" he said.

"Yes. I've got some chicken!" And on the way up to the kitchen, still half in his arms, sniffing back her tears, she asked him, "How was the journey?"

They had a meal together, sitting at a slatted garden-table that had come from the summer-house at Aldercote. It was quite dark outside now and he could see a solitary roof ~~top~~ ^{quite} ~~close~~ ^{at hand} shining faintly in the moonlight, through the small kitchen ~~window~~ ⁱⁿ. They said little at first. ~~The silence between them was sad.~~ ^{how it had been} He described the sea, quite still and blue for three days. They'd anchored at Syracuse for a couple of hours and he'd drunk thick red wine with a talkative corn-merchant from Texas who wore an enormous sort of cow-boy's hat and never really looked at him while he talked, only gazed all round him ~~rather~~ sleepily.

"Your hair got bleached," she said, and gave him ~~an affectionate~~ ^{a little kiss} on the cheek.

She told him she'd been on the river at Hampton Court with the Pollockes. And she'd been so happy getting back to London: one could live as one wanted to here, she said, with nobody watching. It was marvellous, this freedom.

seemed,

The party was now a forbidden subject between them, it ~~appeared~~^{seemed}.
ital That was another pattern, made largely by him. Certain matters fell into a ~~forbidden, dark~~^{silent} abyss which grew steadily. So there would always be this source of mistrust between them. It would probably have been fun listening to her descriptions of the party! But the subject was ^{now} dark. He tried to ask her about it, to break through the darkness, but he felt as if a hand had come over his mouth. And she, seeing his face, didn't dare broach ^{it} the matter.

He wanted to ask what the kettle had been doing on the roof; that, again, was probably an amusing story. Three years before, he'd climbed out there during a party, for the devil of it, with ^{her} Pinkie screaming to him to come in. He'd been drunk. But now the roof was a forbidden subject. She looked quite washed-out, from her tears.

ital Her body ~~seemed~~^{was} really sunken with grief. He noticed it for the first time. She leaned on her elbows listlessly, her head hanging. Why couldn't he accept her? wait and see what news she had for him, instead of always taking her by storm like this? 'Why did I send those people away?' he asked himself. Had he sent them away? He was suddenly full of remorse. He'd made a terrible fool of himself! 'Why did I stalk out of the room? Why did my heart beat at the sight of those cars?' He couldn't see what was right any more. He had a familiar sensation of lost and confused authority, that reminded him of the time before they went to ^{Barrab.} ~~Mosul~~.

And everything on the voyage had been so nice. The sky had been light and clear all the time and he'd spent hours watching the white surf behind the boat. 'It's too late now,' he thought. 'I can't undo what I've done.'

They moved the bed back with much puffing and blowing. Then the bedroom was more or less as they'd left it two years before.

She walked about mechanically, getting new sheets from the cupboard and fluffing the mattress up. He noticed for the first time that she'd only got one ear-ring on.

"Where's your other ear-ring?" he asked.

She stopped. "What?" She flinched for a moment, afraid ~~for~~ ~~a moment~~ that he'd said something cutting.

"You've lost an ear-ring."

"Oh, have I?" She put her hand vaguely up to her ear and gazed before her.

"Perhaps it fell off just now," ^{he added.}

"Yes." She gazed about the room, seeming to look for it, but vaguely, without moving from the bed. She was ~~quite~~ lost in thought. She could have been a thousand miles away. It quite frightened him and for a moment his trembling returned.

Then she went into the bathroom. There came the sound of trickling water as she ^{got ready} ~~prepared~~ for bed. He noticed that the pillows still bore the imprint of heads. Objects in the room haunted him. He saw a piece of blue paper in the basket by the desk and found that it was one of his own letters from ^{Barnab} ~~Mabel~~, ending, 'With all love to you, your own Pip.' How embarrassing it was to read that now. And he came across the words, 'you are my darling little calf-nose and I adore you.' Why did he whip himself up into these high dreaming states when they were away from each other? Then there was always a big let-down afterwards, from the spiritual peaks! If he wrote 'dear Pinkie' and signed himself 'Cherio, Pip' they might come together naturally afterwards, without a word being spoken.

When she came back from the bathroom he asked her quietly, "What happened to the child?"

She was standing by the door and looked at him with the same stilled detachment as before, although on guard now. "What child,

Pip?"

The trembling ^{returned} increased like a cold shiver all over his body. "Oh, for God's sake!" he cried. But he was careful not to raise his voice too much. "Didn't we start a child over there?"

"Oh!" She went and tucked a sheet in carefully, her eyes quite closed to him. "Something sort of fell out in the lavatory the other day. I don't know... I've had the curse again, anyway."

There was a moment of relief for him, of a pained kind. He was free again to think out his life! Then it was gone. ~~For~~ The child would have put them right together, perhaps. It would have committed them to each other once and for all. Now there would be ^{no} ~~no~~ more chances.)

By staring at her.

He tried to see if she was lying, "Her flesh must have felt my unwillingness," he thought. She walked about the room, her hair over her brow, detached, a little flushed. "Our flesh decided for us."

She was gazing before her, unblinking, her face quite still. She was like a child: frightened or lying, he couldn't tell which.

"How?" he asked in a whisper.

"What do you mean---how?"

"How could it just fall out?"

She shrugged. "Well, it did. I don't even know if we did start it."

"But you said so! The child was in you."

She was silent for a moment. "Oh, these things are never certain!"

He was looking for a trace of feeling on her face but there wasn't any.

"I don't know any more than you do," she said, and busied herself with the bed again, her face set as he'd never seen it before, even in ^{Barrab} ~~Messal~~ when he'd told her to go and find a dancing partner.

"But don't you feel sorry?" he asked.

"Well, it's just a fact, isn't it?" She threw up her chin a little, blinking, as if casting off a thought very quickly.

After a pause he said, "You didn't get rid of it, did you?"

"Really, Pip!" She laughed and he trusted her at once. "What do you think I am?"

But again her face was set, as if she could be trusted only in that one statement.

"You've changed," he said softly. "If you hadn't changed you'd be sorry not to have the child. You wanted one out there. But you don't seem to have lost anything."

Again she threw up her chin ever so slightly, with a blinking, sensitive movement of the eyes.

"Well, as I said, it's just a fact."

"But I say you've changed."

She turned to him and to his surprise gazed at him reflectively for a time, her brow clear, as if thinking over what he'd just said in a perfectly objective ^{way,} ~~manner.~~

"Tell me how I've changed, then!"

He felt at a loss for a moment but took the plunge, and his voice quivered. "You see ^{er} m harder ~~er~~."

"How?" She showed no surprise, ~~and~~ no regret. Her face ^{was} ~~remained~~ exactly the same as before, quite clear.

"You don't seem to belong to me any more. It's the way you look at me!"

"I've had a holiday from you, ^{that's} all!"

"Yes."

"Well, I suppose I need time to get back to you." She said it as a suggestion, which he could either accept or not. She herself didn't ~~seem to~~ know!

"I always have to get used to you again, don't I?" she added.

"Do you? Why?"

She didn't answer. He half turned away and murmured, "I don't know, you seem so inhuman sometimes."

She went on with the bed. He wanted her to deny angrily what he'd just said. But she always accepted his verdicts mutely. Ironically, he was far from accepting them himself. She got a wretched picture of herself ^{passely} from ~~all the~~ remarks he threw out ^{just} ~~simply~~ to provoke her.

His body was slightly bowed as he stood by the door, in a posture of defeat. Then he moved, straightened his back and began unbuttoning his shirt. He didn't want to sleep, nor did he want to stay up. He didn't want to read and he didn't want to go on talking to her. He had an entombed, static feeling.

"The party went on for three days, did it?" he asked.

She glanced round at him and answered in a subdued voice, "More or less."

"You must have enjoyed that," he said in a deliberately light tone, trying to make amends for what he'd done earlier.

But she mistook him. "Oh, really?" Her voice ^{was} sarcastic.

"I wasn't being funny!"

"Why shouldn't I enjoy it?" Her *mettle was up*.

"I told you," he said quietly, "I wasn't being funny."

"Well, it sounded as if you were!"

ital "Pinkie," he said, ~~quietly~~ as quiet as before, touching her on the arm. He drew her in a light movement towards him. To his surprise she didn't resist. "Have you been up to anything?"

She stared straight into his eyes, her mouth open, it seemed to him with terror, and ~~she~~ whispered, "What do you mean?"

"Have you been having ~~an~~ a ffairs/ or anything of that sort?"

"*A* ffair?" Her lips were dry and she didn't cease staring

him in the eyes. "Of course, I haven't, darling!"

He ~~had~~ said 'affairs' because he couldn't bear to pronounce the dreadful specific phrase 'an affair', though it was what he wanted to say and what he meant.

"Are you sure?" he asked, his ~~voice~~ ^{throat so} / ~~throat~~ dry that he could hardly talk.

"Of course, I'm sure!"

The words were a great comfort to him. But since she kept staring at him, wide-eyed, he could tell nothing from her face.

He nodded and let her go. And a moment later he felt foolish

and embarrassed for having asked ~~what he did~~. The question made him

~~feel suffocated~~; it was an offence against the cheerful formality

they liked to keep up. And, now he was safe for a moment, or ~~thought~~ ^{assumed}

he was, he became rebellious at the thought that an ~~adventure~~ ^{affair} should

be a ~~possibility~~ ^{considered} ~~only~~ ^{le} on her side. Didn't he want freedom as well?

wasn't the intimacy between them irksome to him as well? didn't he

stand her height and wasn't he just as capable of adventure^s, etc. etc?

His ~~own~~ ^{own} question had touched his pride. *Didn't she realize it was betrayal he was talking about, not some paltry little act of sex?*

She got into her pyjamas quickly and went to bed.

"God, I'm so tired," she murmured.

This was a sign for him not to touch her; it was understood between them. But he had no desires.

He took off his shirt and stood leaning against his desk naked to the waist. She closed her eyes, tucking the sheet up under her nose, her brow clear like a child's. Sleep came to her quickly and soon he'd be alone.

Poor Pinkie didn't want anything direct from him. So a habit of procrastination had grown up between them. ^{That was it, he mused to himself.} His love suffocated her like his speeches. She didn't want love that was serious and demanding, ~~that was a fact.~~ ^{wanted} She could do with something lighter,

with minimum responsibility. It was the responsibility that hurt and troubled her; he imposed it at every point. ~~He must~~ ^{get} ~~always to the rock-bottom of a situation. The answer must be simple and clear. But her gaze flickered: how ever could they go on living together with such unequal demands?~~ She shuddered at going so deep into life. Yet she had terrific character. But life must be embroidered. It was such an awful sight for him when a frown of thought came on her soft brow, splitting it unnaturally. And she lay there now, resting from him in perfect sleep, seeming to gaze at the distance with her eyes tight shut, as if it was something beautiful that made her still, in ~~utter~~ repose.

The breeze from the window chilled his back and he remembered that his pyjamas were still in his case. He went next door and pulled them out roughly. Then he, too, got into bed, careful not to touch her. The darkness was pleasant. It made him feel he was hiding, even from himself, in a wonderful suspension of reality. He stretched out his toes and yawned. The lamplight outside streamed in between the curtains on to the chimneypiece. It was good living in the City where everything was so quiet in the evening, with ^{the} silent offices all round. It was still like countryside now. He heard the screech of a barn-owl. All at once he felt drowsy and quite cheerful. He could ^{see} a chimney and a bit of roof opposite, between the curtains. Pinkie felt hot at his side and swiftly ~~she was making him~~ her warmth ^{drew} ~~was drawing~~ him ^{into} ~~to~~ sleep. He crooked his legs under hers and put his right arm round her waist in the way they'd been ^{doing} sleeping for five years. And it established a different reality for him, ~~the only true one~~, so that the party and everything he had said afterwards became absurd, and this familiar reality of warm thighs close together and the ~~familiar~~ sound of breathing ^{was the only one for him} ~~were totally dominant~~. He was happy to be back in his room.

He dreamt of Basrah that night; he was following Pinkie through the dusty, crowded main street, trying to push his way past donkeys and mules, slapping at their haunches, edging between the almost stationary cars in the middle of the road, while she went further and further away until finally she was lost.

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Chapter 4.

Next morning ^{possible} he woke early and knew ^{it was lovely day} even before he opened his eyes, ~~that it was a lovely day~~. There was an unusual hush, like countryside in the heat, muffling the traffic in the distance. He lay ^{here} for some time, breathing deeply, almost asleep. Then he opened his eyes and saw the sky between the curtains, clear and very blue, with wisps of white cloud. The chimneys looked sharp and red by contrast, like painted nanvas held against the sky, ~~extraordinarily fixed~~. There was such stillness in the air that everything looked fixed and vivid, even the furniture of the room, with a stream of sunlight pouring through the window on to the chimneypiece ^{brilliant} in one straight shaft.

Pinkie was fast asleep, lying on her side, and he realised drowsily that his hand still lay on her hip ^{from the night before,} and his legs were ^{still} crooked in hers. He saw the monkey on the curtain, gazing sadly out. ~~How marvellous these first moments of the day were.~~ Their bodies lay in ^{one united} the same warmth, joined so much together that he couldn't tell at ^{first} ~~once~~ how his ~~limbs~~ ^{limbs} differed from hers; ^{he} and ^{to make sure} had to move slightly. The City made a busy, hushed throbbing in the distance now that the offices were open ~~again~~. And ~~he~~ felt safe. All their divisions of the evening before were absurd. The ^{quarrel} ~~divisions~~ between them in ^{Barrab} ~~Mesut~~, the incident with the clerk from Kirkuk, were distant and

absurd. Last night was unreal. Only this was real, the act of lying together, melted into one creature by the warmth.

He got up, careful not to disturb her, and without thinking went through the same motions as on morning after morning two years before, leaning his arm first on the bed and then on the wall behind him so as to lever himself over her ^{without waking her,} ~~with the least disturbance.~~ And, just as she'd done nearly always before, she turned her face as if to look up at him, but with her eyes closed, then snuggled back into her pillow again and fell ^{fast} asleep. Only her short, auburn hair showed above the sheet.

He tiptoed out of the room and closed the door carefully, remembering that the latch never worked properly and one had to wait for a slight clicking noise before letting go of the handle. The brightness from the street below made him blink at first. It filled the music-room with a hot glow, making it strangely like a tropical garden, every colour---the cool blue of the carpet, the silver chintz covers of the armchairs, the delicate grey piano and the dazzling white bookshelves---fixed and separate in the stillness. He did love this house! Every room had its soul!

The sun shone down the length of the street, on both pavements, and he caught sight of a small red milk-cart on the other side by the kerb. That, too, looked extraordinarily vivid and clean. It was operated by hand, he remembered, an electrical trolley that went the pace of a man. At one time, about three years before, there'd been a horse called Tim, and Pinkie had always taken down a bag of carrots and apples on Saturday mornings for him. But then Tim was transferred to another milkman because the man on this round went down with heart trouble and said he couldn't manage a horse any more; also he needed the extra bit of exercise. But it was sad without Tim. Other people would be overfeeding him now. He had

a huge, round belly that looked as if it would burst the shafts. And Tim used to put his muzzle against Pinkie's stomach and give her a ^{big,} ~~mighty,~~ affectionate shove.

The milkman^{hadn't} changed and Granville watched him with a drowsy interest as he went up the steps to one of the front doors with a crate of bottles in his hand, his body leaning slightly to one side and his free arm held outwards so as to give himself balance, rather like a tightrope walker. That was exactly as he'd done it two years before. Indeed, his movements were so precisely the same and so familiar to Granville that, ^{seen him} ~~he had felt he'd last seen the milkman from this window,~~ ~~standing in exactly the same position, not two years before but~~ ^{only} ~~yesterday~~ ~~day morning.~~ All the interval disappeared in a moment of giddiness. ^{between. It made him feel giddy.} Where were those two years? He had an uncanny conviction that he hadn't been away at all but had fallen into a long sleep. ^{Barah} ~~Mosul~~ was a perfect blank for him.

^{He was hardly conscious now of them at all.} The ^{milkman} man had a sharp, lined worker's face with thin lips and humble, averted eyes, hardly seen. He always gave a kindly good-morning to passers-by, touching his cap, and then averted his eyes at once, back to the task of milk-bottles, as if he found looking outside his ^{own} world painful and ^{perhaps} also offensive to some hidden decorum in him. ~~He was wholly absorbed in his own movements; all his warmth and safety seemed to be contained in them.~~ He ~~seemed to want to~~ passed unnoticed, rapt in his work, with a hidden devotion that made a tiny glistening point in his eyes, ~~if one cared to look at him closely enough.~~ He put empty bottles back into the cart and took fresh ones out, never pausing, slightly bowed all the time, his lips set and his eyes with their rapt look, sunk and almost hidden, tiny points.

~~But these movements weren't the whole of his work, that is, he wasn't rapt simply in what his hands did as a function, but in the whole of the act as part of the day, together with the clean morning air,~~ ^{There was a lot of}

There was the clean morning air,

the familiar ^{the man's} scrape of his boots on the pavement, the clink of bottles in his crate, the subdued click made by his trolley as he pulled on the brake, and his modest rat-tat on the door. ^{so familiar! And all done with} ~~He was offering these things~~ a kind of worship ~~it seemed.~~ Granville watched him ~~do~~ closely. ~~How else could he have done this work~~ ^{How} day in and day out like a precise machine, for ten or twenty or ~~perhaps~~ ^{keep} thirty years, and yet kept the gleam of love in his eyes? All at once Granville's interest was aroused. Of course, the man wasn't performing a function at all! Work wasn't the movement of his hands for him any more than Granville's work in Basrah was filling in invoices and dictating letters: the work in Basrah was the whir of the fan in the office, the blinding sunlight against the shutters of the window, the call-to-prayer blaring from a minaret across the road, and the sound of Mohammed sucking his teeth! And this milkman was in the open, the weather was part of his work; it was a ritual of nature almost, without explanation. The expression in his eyes was that of a man listening to a marvellous story all the time! *That was it!*

That way of gazing reminded Granville of his own father; he had the same gleam in his eyes after working for thirty years on the docks near Tilbury! And secondly it reminded him of Abu Kath'm; she was his house-boy's mother in Basrah, and lived in a mud-hut at the bottom of the garden, by the banana-trees. Was there a comparison to be made? He felt it was important for his other thoughts, to stand by the window and go on thinking, while the house was still silent and Pinkie asleep. How quickly his nervousness from the previous evening had passed! He knew his nerves were once more calm because otherwise he would have no passion for thought. ~~But Abu Kath'm and this milkman were so different.~~ ^{They were so different.} ~~Her~~ ^{Her} stride was long and slow, with her head lifted in perfect steadiness. Such a walk would be laughed at in almost any city---so round and flowing

n.p.

n.p.

But why did he think of them together now - his father, this milkman, Abu Kath'm?

and self-assured! ^{whereas} And the milkman's walk---one couldn't say a stride--
 was hurried; it was slavish in comparison, as if a whip was raised over
 him. ^{his father's, too.} And while Abu Kath'm's gaze was fixed on the distance in a fiery
 way, his was sunken and concealed. Yet the glitter at the centre of
 their eyes was the same. And their movements, while from totally
 different worlds, ^{had} suggested the same awe of things. ~~round them~~ That
 was what his father had in his eyes, ^{too,} a look of belief and awe.
 But there was something else behind it, too. It was a look of confid-
 ence. It suggested that ~~the things all round one~~ could be depended on.
 It wasn't a personal or active confidence: it wasn't a chosen state ^{at all}
 but a complete faith in the constancy of the world, ^{which} ~~Nor was it at all~~
~~a self-confidence; such an active state of mind belonged to the educat-~~
~~ed classes. It was simply a state of connection with a world that~~
~~went along on one continuous theme and hummed with one activity. Their~~
~~eyes didn't pry into the outside world, glancing interrogatively from~~
~~object to object. They looked at things hazily. They had the same~~
~~patient and humble air, too, as before a theme to which they must list-~~
~~en. That was the light in Abu Kath'm's eyes as she gazed into the~~
~~distance, her head lifted proudly: the theme was in her and all round~~
~~her; she didn't see a world of haphazard ^{or} accidental ^{events} happenings.~~
~~Her gaze ^{wasn't} was the gaze of an animal, altogether lost in reflection; nor~~
~~was it the scrutinising gaze of someone never lost. It was between the~~
~~two. It did gaze at the human world of things, and yet it invested~~
~~everything with a safe and calm theme. And the milkman had essentially~~
~~the same gaze. That was the ^{marvellous} story he seemed to be listening to. A~~
~~gleam of belief, like a flame, had been kept intact in them both.~~
^{This} ~~That~~ was how ^{Granville's} ~~his~~ night of thought had begun in Basrah, through his
 seeing ^{the} ~~this~~ gleam in Abu Kath'm for the first time; he had seen her in
 the afternoon, during the eclipse, standing in the garden. Her black
 cloak had been drawn nearly over her face so that only the slits of her

eyes were visible, keen and shining, the henna-mark on her brow lurid in the strange light. She had warned him against Allah, pointing up at the hazy sun. Allah was in the sun, she said, and was very angry at this moment---that was why he was hiding himself! And this had begun thoughts in Granville for which he'd been waiting ten or twenty years. He realised how often he'd asked himself, without finding the actual words, 'What does it feel like to believe in God?' And before him, in her, there seemed to be an answer if only he could penetrate to it. And so he'd begun to try, all night.

He turned away from the window, yawning, and realised with a hidden twinge of pain that he'd just been 'thinking'---standing quite still, his jaw thrust forward, his eyes popping out of his head, floating!---his fists clenched, thinking, thinking!

He stopped on his way to the door. It was the first shame, of that squeezing and burning kind, a bleak, dispirited remorse for the whole nature of his being, that he²₄ had had for two years.

Chapter 2.

He went upstairs to the kitchen, which was tidy now apart from a bucket crammed with refuse near the door. The slatted garden table, with the sunlight falling across it, gave the room the look of a tiny summer-house. Along the dresser, on three shelves, were Victorian plates of various sizes, painted in a bluish-grey pastoral scene. He and Pinkie had picked them up at Abbott's Road six years before, after a visit to his parents; they made a whole set, including a soup tureen, a sauce bowl and a magnificent platter for ^{the Sunday roast,} joints, and it ^{had} all cost less than a pound. The young people of Abbott's Road, getting better money now, wanted bright, modern designs, and were throwing the old things out. Pinkie had furnished half this house from the second-hand shops in Abbott's Road. What with the chintz covers and curtains from Pinkie's family, a quiet sedateness from the past hung over the rooms. It was so unlike the lives they actually led!

The kitchen floor creaked under his foot, ^{while} ~~with~~ the rest of the house ^{was} ~~quite~~ silent. That was how they'd creaked two years before, and he waited for the familiar wooden bump that always followed it.

On winter mornings he'd taken breakfast here alone, before it was light, at the time he was working at Copthall Avenue, round the corner. He always liked to give himself an hour of quiet before work. He

Bump! —
Here it
was!

remembered the rustle of ^{the morning} his paper as he used to open it at the table, in the silence of the house, and the sound of his tea-cup as he put it back in the saucer, while the traffic throbbed ~~very~~ softly in the distance, getting steadily louder. ^{Here} ~~In this world~~ he didn't have to think. Everything was provided for one. Life throbbed outside. He would probably fall back into his old habits---an evening concert, theatres, coffee with friends in the attic room next door, while his real self ~~seemed~~ ^{lay} in abeyance all the time. But there would be no office this time, for two months. That was bad, perhaps. ^P

There was nothing in the larder, only a scrap of soiled grease-proof paper, so he went automatically to the door and took down the canvas bag from a hook. It looked the same, like a small sack, with dusty earth at the bottom from ~~carrying~~ potatoes. He realised he'd taken it down without looking first. His steps across the room, the blind way his hand ^{had risen} ~~rose~~ towards the hook on the door---the last two years might just as well not have existed!

There was a ~~shop~~ ^{get} on the corner called Amy's where he could ^{get} everything. It was a very narrow, ~~shop~~, wedged between houses, the only shop in the whole ~~of the~~ street, ^{and} a dark, mysterious, ~~little place~~ with a rich display of packets and tins ~~piled high~~ in the window. There was always a combined smell of soap and cheese, he remembered. A fresh ham and ^{always} ~~various~~ cheeses stood on the counter, and sometimes there was a vast tray of home-made bread-pudding, thick with sultanas and currants. ^{herself} Amy ~~was the name of the owner, still a young woman.~~ She ~~was~~ plump, with healthy dark eyes and flushed cheeks, rather Irish-looking, and she always ^{gave} ~~liked to give~~ him extra weight, ^{with a little wink.} ~~when he asked for ham or bacon, with a little wink.~~ A light was usually necessary in the shop because it was so narrow, so that it glowed cosily, with bright packets piled ~~everywhere~~ up to the ceiling. Just over two years before she'd had her first child and her husband had served behind the counter for a

time. Then she ~~came~~ ^{had} come back and now kept the child in a little pram behind the counter between the piles of wrapped bread and corn-flakes. There was never any hurry about her. A special calm and silence hung over the shop. She went about her work with a delicate kind of concentration, slowly. And she made the street outside seem in the country. h.p. [Now he had to steel himself to meet her again. It was such an effort: with surprise he found he wanted to hide himself away; he recoiled from leaving the house. That was another sensation he hadn't had these two years, ^{since leaving} His initiative had taken a blow.

~~And~~ As he went downstairs he again had ^{an} ~~the~~ unpleasant sense of unworthiness that ^{was also familiar from two years before.} ~~had seized him a few moments before, in the music-room.~~ What was this ideal pattern of life he fell short of? He was full of confused thoughts, like dry voices in his brain. And this state also he remembered from two years before, going down these same stairs, dark and soft to the feet, with the same canvas bag in his hand. His body had lost some of its assurance since last evening. Was that his imagination? His legs felt out of step with the rest of him. "Oh, please stop my brain!" he felt like crying.

He needed butter, sugar, bacon and eggs, brown bread. ^{He must concentrate.} He made a list in his mind, going down the stairs, as he'd always done before. And he felt automatically in his pocket for the money. And milk. Had he seen a packet of tea upstairs? He'd better get one, in case. A little sweat formed itself on his upper lip as he went down the last ^{steps.} ~~set of stairs.~~ He felt a twinge of peculiar revulsion and giddiness, like a desire to jump out of his own body, because he couldn't accept himself. The thought ^{again} ~~went~~ ^{for no apparent reason, the guest indeed} across his brain that ~~everybody~~ ^{he} had left ~~the house~~ ^{on his account last night.} "Why did I send them away?" ^{he asked himself.} ~~he thought.~~ "Why did I stalk out of the room?" "Why did my heart beat at the sight of the cars outside?" Everything on the voyage had been so light and clear, like the surf behind the boat! ~~It is too~~

late now. I can't undo what I've done.' Why did he behave so foolishly? ^{But} At this moment life seemed so ^{flat and} plain and ^{deadly} obvious ^{to him} that his own behaviour ^{was} grotesque. And the question he'd asked Pinkie last night! What exaggeration---what outlandish ^{thinking!} thoughts! A hot blush of shame went through him, making his heart beat fast and sweat appear on his brow. How could he have done it?

But what was the truth? His mind wavered, putting its timid little question. What about his instincts, were they nothing? But again the plain and obvious world asserted itself. Only that was true! Of course, nothing was wrong! The rest was madness and dreams! There they were again, those little ghosts in his brain fighting each other! They'd been so quiet these two years!

He walked through the dark hall downstairs and stood at the top of the steps gazing into the street and breathing in the morning air. That was better. Ah, the air did one good!

Sunlight still drenched the street, blinding him at first. It was quite like ^{Barral} ~~Mosul~~ in the early morning! The only shadow was under the porches of the houses opposite, where the ~~milkman~~ was. Granville hurried past the milk-trolley, hoping to escape the man's notice. A revulsion from all public contact filled him. And the milkman didn't look up. ^{influenced by being} Then, ~~now he was really~~ out of doors, his body underwent a sudden quickening process. He felt quite different. It wasn't simply that there was more noise and light. It was a total bodily influence, like suddenly waking up, with no trace of drowsiness. His mood of revulsion was quite gone. The house, behind him, seemed like a shrine of thought, dark. It was like waking up, yet also it was like surrendering his real ~~xxx~~ self, like dying. How could he be so malleable to life? Apparently, the night of the eclipse had achieved less for him than he'd thought! Perhaps one day he would be

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those mornings had smelled different - it was the smell of the smooth, shiny surface of the charabanc, and the bag of sandwiches, and the rubbing of his plimsolls, and melting tar from the hot roadway.

able to walk out of the house with the same self that had been thinking inside it. But that would mean a long journey yet!

His trousers flashed white in the sunlight as he crossed the road, and he was conscious of their ^{brightness} colour against the grey of the street. Surely they were too conspicuous? Someone passed on the other side, walking quickly, a man in drab clothes. ~~The moment Granville looked across at him he glanced away, his lips pursed.~~ Absurdly, he resolved to take off these flashing trousers when he got back?

The street looked like a village in the sunlight, with the clear blue sky beyond the roofs. It reminded him of Abbott's Road ~~in the summer~~ ^{summer in his childhood before} ~~on the days when there would be an outing to the sea, and he would wake early~~ ^{with excitement} ~~a long charabanc would be waiting~~ ^{would be waiting} outside the Co-op hall and he would ~~be wearing~~ ^{would be wearing} plimsoll shoes for the sand. But almost at once a melancholy shadow followed this memory. ~~It wasn't a village. The supporting trees and the smell of hay weren't there. He'd often had this same sequence of feelings as a child at Abbott's Road: first~~ ^{first} ~~the sense of a village, as he gazed down from his window into the bright street,~~ then the little eclipse of hope that came inexplicably.

Most of the houses looked brighter than they'd done two years before. There were white walls and newly-painted window frames. ~~It was~~ Surprising what a bit of paint did to the brickwork. The grim, industrial look had gone. He decided to walk down to Commercial Road, just to see it again. The trams were gone now, and the tracks ^{that was a clatter of passing trams and cars on the way to the city.} had been taken up, which gave the road a wider appearance than before. It all looked as dusty as ever, squat shops and coloured hoardings. ^{tiny, thin-faced} A man was selling newspapers on the corner, ~~the same as two years before, tiny and thin,~~ ^{he had} with 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 ~~little~~ 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, "Pap-er!
Mornin' pap-er!"

Not only did his thoughts seem ridiculous but he couldn't remember what they ^{were} ~~had been~~. 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} ~~content~~. The clatter of the street made up for the loss, ^{it} ~~and~~ lived on his behalf!

Most of the passing women had bright print-dresses on, with bare arms. It was so different from ^{Barral} ~~Mosul~~, 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. ~~There was even a street sex.~~ Some of the younger women walked in a provocative and challenging way, tight-hipped, ~~their blouses out low in the neck.~~ One young woman passed him gazing straight before her, with the suggestion of a smile on her lips, well-built, pale, ~~and~~ quite pretty, her jump ^{er} cut low enough to show the slight shadowy rift between her breasts, tantalising and subtly devised, as if ~~the Commercial Road were the foyer of a brilliant theatre and~~ there were hundreds of men's eyes ~~upon~~ ^{any one} her. It was flirtation conducted in the brain, with ~~no one~~. She held a shopping basket in one hand, loosely, and her hips rolled 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 ~~day's~~ sunlight, she would have looked ~~like the women of the caravels in Mander Street~~ ^{like the women of the caravels in Mander Street} voluptuous and calm. ~~had great voluptuous power a real voluptuous attraction.~~ But life was too plain for that, the line seemed to say. Yet in her body, showed in her eyes, in her long, graceful step and in the smile that ~~made the slightest~~ ~~light in her eyes~~ distant and wonderfully self-assured, there was

At the same time he was affected, and he ~~closed~~ ^{felt} sent an unbearable, vibrant thrill through his body, making his mouth dry. Then she was gone.

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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} ~~suggesting~~ a quick, clandestine, forbidden contact.)

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} ~~frail~~ style, suburban imitation of the Palladian. They looked ^{so} drab and stifling in their dingy brick-work. 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 ~~fix~~ ^{fence} 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!"

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, ~~gazing straight up at him~~ sitting astride, silently absorbed in a game of wooden shavings.

"He's as good as gold," she added, almost in a whisper, ~~gazing~~ ^{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 finger 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."

~~She collected herself~~ "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~~ 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

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, ~~as~~ 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 ^{always} as 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

And he had a sense of restriction — in his tongue —
as if it was chained down — from not having spoken his fill! To Amy! 117.
He never spoke the fullness of his feelings — no more!

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 —
Again he was aware of the two worlds in
him. Amy's voice had called him back. He'd stood before her tongue~~

it's ~~to her! Anything!~~ a man between two borders! He ought to have said more. He could have talked about his own mother, for instance. But

~~the worlds were too far apart. In her eyes he belonged to the~~

l.c. ~~educated classes.~~ 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 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 enclosed, 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!} This was suddenly a firm conviction. 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 ^{Barrak} ~~Mosul~~ and on the voyage, he'd been assuming the

presence of a third spirit~~ly~~ in her---the only part of them that would have been innocent.[!]↑ Her face had a pale, smooth look---he had the sensation that something close to her had st~~o~~len away while she slept and she didn't know it yet. There was the pallor of loss.

It's 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.

It's 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 ~~a child~~^{them}. And Pollocke ~~then~~ replied that it was just disposing of an unconscious embryo, like a toe-nail that ^{grew} grows without having a mind, and which we pare 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: ~~that~~ he'd felt its spirit, for the first time, ^{through} by its being snatched away!

He cooked himself a good breakfast, two eggs, bacon and toast, ~~with~~ 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.}
~~There was n't a sound from the rest of the house, and he found this a relief.~~ It occurred to him ~~for no apparent reason~~ 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. Some ^{usually it was * glorified self-abuse.} times it wasn't. But ~~it rarely amounted to more than both of them achieving satisfaction of their own accounts and leaving it at that.~~
 Why ^{did} ~~had~~ they ^{get} married, then? Because they couldn't bear to ^{part} ~~see~~ each other; ~~go~~ Getting married was the only way of staying together! ^{from}
 They ^{had} 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 ~~slightly~~ ^{and less than love.} more than ~~the most tender~~ ^{sex} friendship. But there was no natural ^{what there was} communion: ~~of sex between them~~ ^{that} had grown from the tenderness, slowly, after they were married, ^{that} and even then it was probably no more than ~~she needed~~ ^{that} ~~And it was spasmodic.~~ All too often his desire was too direct for her: she wanted subtle and intricate approaches; even cruelty, ~~perhaps~~ would have thrilled her more. But now and then they did achieve a wonderful voluptuous harmony between them, quickly gone—soon forgotten under the weight of further attempts to repeat it.

They approached each other from opposite poles. She needed to be beyond herself for her passions to rise---and, thus, beyond him.

got excited

Everything had to be enhanced. She closed her eyes and only ~~quick~~ ^{got excited} ~~aned to him~~ when ^{his} the touch of his fingers seemed anonymous to her; when she could forget him as he was ~~during the plain hours.~~ ^{at other times,} And he, wrecking his chances, obtruded himself, ~~all the time,~~ gazing at her and talking. She could only keep the flame of her sex alive in dimness. The ~~unseen~~ ^{dim and shadowy} ~~and forbidden~~ excited her; but he was frightened! ~~Plain life~~ ^{wasn't enough for her.}

^{ital} But ^{once} — at Stratford on Avon — he could remember with ~~There had been an occasion three or four years before which had~~ ^{pleasure.} contradicted this, however. It was at Stratford on Avon, when they went ^{They'd gone} up from Reading to see 'The Tempest', and stayed the night at a small, cosy inn near the river. ~~He thought afterwards that~~ ^{to them,} The spirit of the room was ^{was} ~~specially~~ favourable, perhaps, with its bright curtains and tiny mullioned windows; ~~or~~ it might have been the previous occupants' ^a ~~whose~~ ^{lingering} ~~voice of good luck. Anyway,~~ ^{really} appetites ~~suddenly inspired them.~~ ^{It} was the first time they ~~abandon-~~ ed themselves to each other; ~~and then,~~ her breasts glistened with his kisses in the darkness, ~~while~~ ^{that time!} her nipples protruded, hard and dark, and she pushed her body up towards him, opening her legs until they were bent under her, making her stomach seem massive. ~~There were~~ ^{No sighs!} ~~no endearments.~~ ^{Just plain business — a clap of thunder — a flood! It happened} ~~He hadn't even approached her beforehand. It was accidental and sudden,~~ ^{suddenly, the moment they were in bed.} ~~emerging naturally from the silence after they went to bed.~~ All

^{ital} All their movements seemed determined beforehand, so that they didn't seem the authors of them; and every muscle and nerve in them was ready for the other; they were absent to each other as far as their personalities went, and only their bodies were together, their minds in a condition of dumb support. That occasion showed how far they were on the wrong track most of the time; they were trying to get at the body through ~~me~~ words and pleasantness, through admiration and decent feeling, and it wouldn't do, not with this magnificent, primeval beast of the body in them---yes, it was still a beast, ecstatic and dignified, despite civic modifications. But when he mentioned the occasion to her afterwards,

as something quite special, she said she didn't remember it; though they repeated it afterwards now and then, in the same accidental way. 'Stratford' became his word for the sex---which meant trust, silence---they ought to enjoy.

CHAPTER 4

Dick and Hanni came over again the next evening---which surprised and excited him. So he hadn't frightened people away! He was in his shirt-sleeves when they called---he dashed down-stairs to let them in, having seen them from the bedroom window, but there was no need as the front door was always open these days, on the latch. At once the house felt warm and thrilling to him, full of deep colours, as it had done two years before. He waved them into the hall and they smiled back at him.

"Hullo, Pip! We thought we'd come and help you finish the punch!"

"Yes, come on!" As if it was his punch---he was overjoyed!

"And to hear all about it," Dick added *quietly*.

Pinkie was standing on the first landing.

"Trust you to come and finish the dregs," she called down with a familiar chuckle.

"Well, how's mum?" Dick called up to her, stumbling a little on the stairs at the bottom. He clearly liked Pinkie an enormous lot: ~~and~~ a bit in awe of her, ^{too} ~~perhaps~~---he was smiling so pleasantly and youthfully!

"Have you recovered yet?" Hanni asked her.

"Hardly!"

"Never again!" Dick murmured.

They sounded familiar and easy, their tone already formed, without his help. But yet it seemed to include him. Or rather, there was no sign that it didn't. But yet---! How funny this sadness was---that came suddenly, drawing him back! Was that Basrah? Him, Pinkie?

They ate a scratch meal in the kitchen, ~~sitting with bare arms~~ sitting with bare arms. It was still sultry-hot, and the window was open at the bottom, showing the roofs of houses and a few commercial temples near the river like strange grey

beyond,
 turrets and steeples in an extraordinary island-city ^{with} ~~which had~~ flat, green fields ~~/surrounding it,~~ the sky immense and high even in the dying light. The lightness and greyness of everything was strange to him now, ~~making~~ ^{giving} a curious heady effect. Yet he felt more joined to his Basrah-self now---the journey between had died away, and he really looked at Hanni and Dick for the first time. Now they'd be friends! He was certain of it! Again Hanni's wide, densely black and smoky ~~xxxx~~ Arab eyes, ~~and~~ her dark skin faintly pock-marked with traces of the desert-boil, ~~and~~ her smooth black hair drawn back so tight from her brow, ~~and~~ her thick eyebrows that nearly met over her nose, brought him back to the Basrah-world; and the dark glow of her skin made it seem that they were in their dining room in the consular district again, as the sun was going down, leaning over the table, and the printed blue plates, the bright dresser behind her, were eastern colours, after the stupendous day-heat, in the evening when silence was appreciated like the coolness, and thoughts came slowly, ~~and~~ with an extraordinary methodical patience. Dick was pale next to her, or seemed to be--- a little austere, but warm, twinkling, with a certain kind of inaccessible cleanliness: it was in his fingers, their nails clean and well-kept, the pads under his nails delicate and pale, also square-looking, as if they touched things softly but firmly. But his beard! Why didn't he cut the damned thing off? It looked as if one could blow it away! One wanted to---puff and it was gone! A beard meant charlatan in our world, self-conscious and pettily assertive. But not in Dick. He made it seem a whimsical little touch---^{put} there just because it wasn't like him at all, a little bit cussed, not quite healthy, either! A strange bird!

They went downstairs afterwards and sat on the bedroom floor with the bowl of punch in the middle---Dick wanted to hear all about Basrah, and Granville was bubbling over to talk about it.

It was dark now but the curtains were still undrawn and the lamp on the chest-of-drawers, reddish and mellow, was reflected in the window, making the room seem endless and full of mysterious colours. They were all sweating slightly---it was good, good to be there! This was the homecoming! How on earth could he expect a conventional homecoming from Pinkie, involving just the two of them, cooing together in bed and then what? No, thank

God, they weren't a little couple and never would be! One needed friends, that was the real homecoming, something total, not just sex and the tiresome petty marriage-unit of two---thank God they didn't have that! Thank God they weren't a little couple in a little box! Pinkie preserved him from that: look what he could have married! At least, with her, one was in the world, not suffocated in a deathly maffiage-box! She was in trousers this evening, her feet bare, half-lying on the floor against cushions, exactly as she was in Basrah when they went to see someone in the student-group, where they could relax. Her blouse was open low, showing part of her breasts. Yet---! Were her breasts smaller? More inaccessible to him? Not belonging to him any more? Not wifely any more? And so a sad after-thought came to chase the first away. But it was quickly swallowed up in reminiscences about Basrah.

"Well, did you enjoy it, Pip?" Dick asked him seriously.

"Not enjoyed exactly but---"

"Interesting?"

"Yes!"

Pinkie chuckled. "It never stopped being that! Even the boredom was interesting, wasn't it, mouse?"

"Yes!"

"It wasn't a drizzly English boredom," Pinkie went on, "it was gaudy, real gaudy---" Dick twinkled at her. "It got right inside you like a disease!"

"A worm," Granville cried, "disgusting but it had something dramatic about it, something was always going on in you!"

"Well," Dick said quietly, "it sounds just the place for a worm like me!"

"You'd hate it," Hanni told him.

"I feel it changed me," Granville said---yes, this was what he wanted to tell them! "It isn't a question of hating it or not---all I know is it changed my life!"

"How?" Dick asked.

"Well, it made life more mysterious! As Pinkie says, even the boredom! Nothing's plain and ordinary! Do you think so, Pinkie?"

"Absolutely!"

"It wasn't because Basrah was new to us," Granville said, "because this sense of mystery didn't grow less as we went on living there but more---do you see what I mean?"

Dick nodded quickly, as if to say that so far it was obvious and didn't need emphasis.

"It was behind everything you did---every little thought! It never left you! Do you see what I'm saying---it wasn't really a sense of mystery like you might get here if you went inside a church, just for a moment, it was there, all the time, like the air! It was the basic thing about everything! The thing you always got down to! Don't you think that's extraordinary?"

"If it's true, old sport, yes!" ~~But at the same time~~ ^{And} Dick showed with his eyes that he ^{earnestly} believed him^{self} and yet didn't at all.

"And I felt more mysterious to myself. I felt I was less known and measured up than I'd been here. I began to think of myself---I don't mean in a deliberate way, I mean I was aware of myself as part of the glow all round me, do you see what I mean? A created part! And Pinkie was more mysterious to me than before!" They smiled at her, and Hanni winked, but he went on breathlessly. "Her body was stranger to me---"

"Ah!"

He smiled but wouldn't be pushed off his subject. "More distant! She was more in her own eternity! x You could feel this mystery along the river most---in the evening---in the lights, and the way the oars went into the water without you seeing them! I mean, we knew the lights were just electric bulbs slung on wires, completely botched up and messy, and the river stank, and there was a completely horrible chorus of car hooters from the main street all the time, but it was all part of a glow, do you see what I mean?"

"I had too much of it, Pip," Hanni murmured in her stiff but confidential way, with an endearing purse off her lips, %but I know what you mean..." She looked at the floor. "I think I do."

"But it's in people's faces as well, Hanni! Don't you think so? They've got a kind of eternity in their eyes. Something x that's not in their control---they aren't actually looking at things, they're more gazing! That's partly what I

mean---life's not in one's control there, it's already made for you, I mean in a grand way, not made by men but something no man can control. There's this stirring grandeur in everything---you can feel it in the dust and filth, and the scars and pockmarks, and the ~~khamxin~~ khamxin---!"

~~"Who's he when he's at home?" Dick asked.~~

"The wind," Hanni ^{explained to Dick} ~~murmured~~ in an unwilling way, as if the word struck disgust in her, "the hot wind, it makes you feel rotten."

"I'll tell you something, Dick, I began to feel my own powers there really for the first time in my life!"

Dick gazed at him for a moment, quite serious. "What do you mean?"

"I started listening to the created part of myself---do you see what I mean? I didn't mind myself as much as I did in England---I didn't mind losing my temper if that was on the cards---I mean, the real part of me took over! I don't know---!" He glanced a little desperately at Pinkie. "It's difficult to describe!"

"You mean you didn't have to tame yourself all the time as we do here," Pinkie said, with that neatness she had sometimes.

"That's it! I don't mean I was wild, I was probably much more peaceful than here, but I was just myself, I wasn't in control of myself in the old way---I just let go, I let myself be taken ⁱⁿ by that extraordinary glowing authority outside, and inside me, too!"

"There are dangers there for Englishmen," Hanni said softly. "I know that from my father!"

"Yes, I know what you mean, but I don't mean in behaviour to let yourself go all loose, to let the valves go---anyway, I haven't got valves that always threaten to blow up, I think that's a middle-class thing, I think ~~that's~~!"

"All right," said Dick quietly, hearing the danger-signal of an 'orang-utang' speech, "back to the subject, Phillimore-Jackson, and don't rattle your decorations."

"Well," Granville went on, the wind out of his sails for a moment---'well' was a telltale word with him, "I ~~never~~---"

n.p. ["The glowing authority outside," Pinkie reminded him, chuckling.
 "Yes!" Back again! "For the first time in my life I felt natural! By surrendering! By letting the life outside me and inside me, the mysterious part, take over! I could really lift my head up! Like the Arabs in the desert. Well, I'd never done that before! I've never relished just walking and the things like that before, not like I did in Basrah! You know, I really began to find out for the first time what real natural walking was! Before that, I just seemed to stumble along! We seem all out of joint/in our civilisation! I learned how to walk without hurrying along, without bending over all the time to get there, you see, that's the difference---here we're brought up to think that walking is just a means of getting to somewhere, it's part of a plan and the plan says you sleep now and after a few hours^{of} sleep you go there or you stay here, it's all like a schedule here, it all seems laid down by men, well, look outside the window and you can see the result of that, in streets and buses running to an intricate timetable, and ~~xxxxx~~ newspapers telling you the news from all over the world, everything running on little plans made by men, to serve men, it's all man-made, but there you get the other world, and there is another world, God's world! And I never really knew it existed before! Oh, I thought it existed, I imagined it and I dreamed about it! But in Basrah it was there, as I said just now, it was in the air, it^{was} was the world that lay in front of you, it^{was} was in your food, it was in the way you slept and the ^{way the} palm trees moved outside the window, it was in the way the drums sounded across the river and the way men walked, I didn't feel I had to demean myself before life all the time as I ^{do} did here, I didn't have to humble my own strength all the time, and work on one cylinder instead of eight, and I bet Pinkie felt the same!"

"Did you?" Hanni asked her with a side-glance, smoking so that the smoke curled up her face like a tiny white snake for a moment.

"Not quite like that, no," Pinkie answered with a smile, touching one of her forefingers with her tongue, in a soft, slow motion, as she did when she was thinking something over to herself very privately.

"You know," Granville went on, looking at Dick, "it made me feel I was looking into the past, I mean, the past as it was for this country as well! I had the sensation that people there were more like what people here used to be than we are!"

"Before industries, you mean?" Dick asked.

"Partly, yes, but industries were only what happened as a result of---well, ^{of} something getting lost. I mean, those people don't just believe in God, they don't believe in God^{at all}, I mean God isn't in their minds at all, they just live in a world which was created by something completely beyond them, and which controls them, and which has this extraordinary glow! You see, that's what I mean by this glow---they perceive God---God is this glow that one can smell and see and hear and sleep in! Do you see what I mean? They don't have to believe in God, with their little minds, they perceive him, or rather they perceive the manifestations of him, in a tree, the wind, a sound, that sort of thing! They actually perceive eternity! And I'm saying we used to be able to! But we can't now! We can't perceive eternity, or the glow, or God, or whatever you like to call it, as a simple matter-of-fact or not, as ~~the~~ people used to in our world and still can over there! We have to be lofty about it---we have to think---dream---believe---make an effort---we have to try and get beyond the matter-of-fact, or we think we do! We've lost the power to perceive God, or the things of God, directly! We can't believe in God in the real sense. In the Christian world there can't be a religious person! There's no such thing! We've all lost the faculty! That's what I feel I found out in Basrah! We can only try!"

"But how can you speak for everybody else?" Hanni asked.

That question always baffled him---it baffled him that people ^{could} ask it, as if clear feelings didn't have their natural authority, if they were really clear!

"Oh, I think we can talk for all of life---I mean, if we're interested in that kind of truth. There's no other way of finding it out---I mean, you couldn't produce tables and charts and figures in which such things ^{are} ~~could~~ be decided, could you?" And Hanni nodded quickly, as if her question had already taken ^{them} into a longer speech than she'd intended.

"And there," he went on, turning again to Dick, "you get the main difference between Basrah and London, or ~~between~~ Basrah and any western city. We've made our mark on everything! Do you see what I mean? And industries are only one of the marks! We've put things under a kind of plan, under hundreds and thousands of plans that you can see outside, in any city! We've made the earth for us. You'd think there was nothing but us on the earth, walking through this huge city! You'd think that eternity had been put aside in some way---I mean that glow you get in your daily life in Basrah. I mean, you still, see accidental things there--- a dead dog or cat by the road, half-eaten by carrion birds...!"

"Ucch!" said Pinkie, smiling at Dick.

"But still, it makes you realise, even with the stink in your nostrils, what a kind of basic providence life has there! But in our world we've made everything our business---the garbage gets cleared away, there's a kind of mathematical concept over everything, governing every little hour! Do you see what I mean? I mean, not that you should leave your garbage out, or your dead dogs, but this in our world is the sign that we've got everything under control---as if there wasn't anything beyond us, only men in life, who seem to have created themselves! And that makes an extraordinary empty feeling in the city---just men who come from nowhere and go back to nowhere, without a word of explanation, nothing splendid in life, nothing marvellous and extraordinary beyond men that you can see in the sky, and which brought them into being, and which moves them in the evening sometimes when they are sitting round telling a story, or when they're making love, or when they go out on the balcony at night just before they go to sleep and feel the breeze and hear something in the distance---you get all that out there still, what we've removed from our lives--- just as if removing ~~the~~ garbage contradicted God, which I don't see why it should!"

~~Well, it~~ "Well, it must have been a terrific experience, that's all I can say, Pip," Dick murmured in a respectful way.

"But do you see what I mean?"

"Oh, yes, exactly!"

"You see, I listened to life more in Basrah." He was aware, underneath, of Hanni getting a bit restive---she moved one

^{foot} up and down nervously, and filled her glass again, her lips pursed as when she was under constraint of some kind. "I was aware of what lay beyond men, the great spaces, and how these spaces never spoke or showed themselves but nonetheless brought life into being and draw men back again in the end. Do you see what I'm saying? Not that I discovered something for the first time which is completely obvious to all of us and which was certainly obvious to me as well, long before I thought of Basrah, but that I perceived these spaces for the first time. I felt them! And I never had before! Or not in that continual, daily way! For the first time I experienced a world in which men didn't appear to be the authors!" Dick leaned forward, about to say something But Granville jumped ~~in~~ before him with an idea that seemed suddenly to chase the old one away. "In Basrah I saw a world so marvellous in organisation that it made me shudder, so much more marvellous in organisation that anything I'd seen ^{so much more marvellous} men do, than all the cities, and all the promises! I knew about that marvellous organisation before, as we all do, I had glimpses of it even in the country where I was evacuated during the war, but in Basrah, for the first time, I lived in it, with my own body and desires---they were part of it. as well, my hands, and, well, ~~xxx~~---" He glanced uncertainly at Pinkie---"My sex, everything!"

"I hope you can endorse that, Mrs Granville," Dick said with a little laugh.

"Well, I think I know what my husband means!" Pinkie said, chuckling and wetting her finger again.

"Lots of little things changed in my life---I gave up using the alarm in the morning, I knew by the light what time I ought to get up, just as ~~Katxxxxxx~~ our house-boy did, and I never bustled round my work any more, not as I used to---I did things more when and as I felt like doing them, and you'd be amazed I never got anything in too late for Nevinson's deadlines! I started sleeping in the afternoon---!"

"Yes, that's something all civilised people should do!" Pinkie said.

"I never knew before," Granville went on, "that things could have such a fabulous appearance! Little tiny things like sipping a glass of lemon tea or walking home as the sun was going down or sitting under the fan at the Mesopotamia hotel or eating

chicken livers at the bar with Mohammed---"

"Who's he?" Dick asked, glancing at Pinkie.

"Pip's assistant."

"We used to sit in the bar together while the Kurds from the mountains were kicking up a shindy in the lounge playing cards--"

"They were real savages," Pinkie said, "or rather they looked it---they were rather sweet, really! They wore big baggy trousers and kept daggers in their belts, and they wear little white turbans! Wasn't your dad an authority on them, Hanni?"

"That's right." But ^{Hanni} she wasn't saying any more.

"One day Hanni's going to show me round over there," Dick said, "especially Kurdistan, near the Russian border."

Hanni laughed. "You won't get me near there! I wouldn't dream of going back!"

"Well," Granville said, "I can see what Hanni means, it isn't exciting there, you couldn't be happy, in our sense, like you could here, I mean I think life in England's much more interesting---I feel excited here---for instance, by you two---" He smiled at Hanni and Dick, who made appreciative little nods, half-burlesque in Dick's case. "There's nothing like the clearness and light you get in England---nothing ^{dark} clear at all! There isn't the lightness in the people ^{over there}---I don't know, everything seems separate from one ^{here,} after Basrah, one feels like a kind of enchanted spectator here, if you see what I mean, it isn't the same world at all, English people smile so much compared with people in Basrah, their voices seem so full of independence and optimism, and the feeling ^{you get in that you} can make things all right with a bit of will, ^{if you try!} You see, I think that's Europe, that's our civilisation, it's completely different from there! In Basrah the voices seem to be coming out of the past, they feel deep and dark and dusty, they're controlled from somewhere very deep down, somewhere rather dark and forbidden and concealed, they're held back in the throat compared with our voices, they're not quite conscious as ours are. And the eyes are dark and tired, not lit by a quick curiosity as they are in our world!"

Then he told them about his sense of a shadow passing over him the previous evening, on the train from the coast, as they came into London. "It wasn't because I felt London was ugly,"

Any more

he went on, "Basrah's much uglier, ~~as I said~~, but I started feeling eclipsed as a person, as a creature, at least I think that's why I felt a kind of shadow! I wasn't quite myself as I was in Basrah, I don't mean myself as a personality, I mean myself in my flesh, just in my nerves. Yet it was free here---there was freedom! ~~At the same time~~ I was freed from myself, in a heady sort of way! Here men's thoughts have touched everything, that's what you feel. So you don't go into anything straight, as yourself, naturally! There's some interpretation waiting for you all the time. Men have made things look safe in our world. Our movements aren't watched here as they seem to be in Basrah. We can talk our minds---we can say whatever comes into our heads! Whereas there you're worrying all the time if you're offending someone by mentioning Israel, or someone else by mentioning the Arabs! Everything comes down to spite and division and hatred there, or seems to! But here it's so light, in Europe! Yet at the same time we've lost another kind of freedom! In Basrah we had our own lives, as far as the nerves went, we felt strange to ourselves, we felt created from beyond men! But here we're catered for all the time---by the milkman and the shops and the newspapers and the buses and the idea of growing older and all the little responsibilities that are supposed to go with every age of life, like a clever little plan laid down for us by other men before we are born. We don't make our own lives! Yet we could! In all this planning we could! Here we could! But it takes time. All we do now is to choose our lives from what the outside world offers us, we don't really make it! And my question is whether we can achieve our own lives here, whether ~~one~~ one can go through the day with the same sort of unhesitating physical authority you feel in Basrah, do you see what I mean? It might take one years to achieve. Do you think it's possible?" He paused, gazing at Dick. "Well?"

"Well," Dick said ^{in a quiet voice} ~~quickly~~ looking at him squarely, "if I understand you right, that's about the biggest problem of the lot for me, just that!"

"But is it possible?"

"After years, perhaps," Dick went on, "when you're unsteady on your feet and your hair's falling out and your wife has a young

lover of forty!"

"But you have to change yourself, isn't that it? You have to think things out! Then, perhaps!" By now the women were more or less out of the conversation.

"You have to surrender," Granville added, "learn to surrender to the rhythm outside, to the silence! And I began to ~~xxxxxx~~ do it in Basrah. I began to let my feelings decide when I was tired at night and we were talking to Mohammed by the river---I didn't look at my watch---I let my body tell me, 'It's time to go to bed.' And it was always roughly the same time when I went. Sometimes the body told me nothing and ~~ixwent~~ we went on talking all night---nearly till dawn as the air got colder and the sounds on the river stopped and the call-to-prayer came across the city at about four, over the loudspeakers. I surrendered there! But here we're taught not to surrender! We're taught to look at everything and work everything out! Our bodies get tired like clocks! We work like clocks! And yet you can do the same work, you can do more, without looking at the clock at all! Like Mohammed! He works to the clock in the sense that he comes in at the same time every morning---but the deeper time's still alive in him. When I got out there I started mapping out every day according to the appointments book---so many people to see, so many letters to write---but for Mohammed the day just unfolded---like the dawn unfolding---it opened naturally in front of him and took him with it! Yet he did the work. And he did it without that awful fatigue of the nerves you get here. And I learned it, too! Because it was in the air, all round me! I surrendered! I surrendered to deeper time and deeper space! And that means being stronger, being much more of a man, much more supple and lively! But I hadn't got the strength in me---it was only because it was in the air outside. I didn't take it to Basrah. I learned it in Basrah because it was in the air there. And I want to learn it in myself---by myself---to take it wherever I go ---it means surrendering, I know that---some sort of surrender, but I don't know how to go about it, I don't know the path I should take! I know it'll take a long time! And I've seen that surrender---I've recognised it here, too---I know it exists here---! I've seen it in the

[To P. 132(a)]

eyes of the milkman---" The others glanced at each other---they didn't know the reference, and he was aware of this but hurried on just the same, not caring to explain--- "and in my father, too--- in the world where I was born---there was the same surrender---in my parents---but I've lost it---I've been taught to lose it and I've got to learn it again!"

132 (6) "You have to surrender," Granville added, "I can't surrender to the tyranny outside, to the silence lover of forty!"
"But you have to change yourself, isn't that it? You have to think things out! Then, perhaps!" By now the women were more or less out of the conversation.

At the end, when Granville seemed to have exhausted his subject, but not his desire to talk, Dick turned to Hanni and asked her, "Well, is he right about Basrah?"

"He's right except that it's all disgusting and horrifying, yes. Islam's heartless and cruel and dirty and petty and vindictive, and you can't get away from it whatever else you talk about!" She said the words with a crisp finality---her hatred of that world was final. Then she added in a soft voice, "But I suppose it's all right for an Englishman, if he doesn't stay too long---after all, he puts a lot of himself into it---a lot that doesn't really exist there at all---there's no dignity there, to start with, you start like a dog and you go out like a dog, that's what my father always used to say. He's a good example---he talked like Pip at first, but he stayed there too long, he hated everyone including my mother by the end. Not that mummy was a Muslim but I suppose she must have picked up some of the stink---yes, Pip, I can imagine the dead cats and dogs by the road, that's what sticks in my mind from all you've said!"

"Well---!" Pip shrugged amiably and smiled at her.

"Pip wasn't saying he liked dead dogs," Pinkie murmured, blinking protectively in his direction.

"No, not at all," Granville said, "I'm talking more like a person starved of something, you see! I might agree with you in the end---I'm sure I would---we belong to the same civilisation---but I'm still starved of that sense of providence you get in that other world, for all its stink---that sense of life being untouched in its created part---the silence you get though it's the noisiest place in the world!"

"Well," Dick said, looking sideways at Pinkie. ~~again~~ "Pip's among us again. But I'm for bed---!"

"So am I!" Hanni said, stretching.

Granville let them go without adding anything---they almost scrambled out of the room, Dick chuckling and giving a last twinkling look as if to say, 'Catch us if you can, cock!' Of course,

Pinkie had offered them the bed upstairs in the attic room and they accepted---he was thrilled ~~that the house would~~ that the house would hum with someone else's presence. It was what Pinkie had always dreamed about in Basrah, as her London life, and she was right! They would all get up in the morning and have breakfast together, working by division of labour, Hanni and Pinkie on the food, he on the tea and coffee, and Dick on the morning paper, since by agreement established two years before Dick kept out of the way in the kitchen, ~~xxxxxx~~ his work wasn't worth the mess it made.

But he was also disappointed that they didn't sit there longer, in the way he'd become used ² to in Basrah. ¹Or rather, not longer, it wasn't a matter of time, but with a different sort of rhythm, a slower one. He remembered the clink of the beads during a pause in the talk, while people gazed before them, clink, clink in the dry air, waiting for the talk to exhaust itself naturally---and silence to show the way. But no, he was back in the world where force was used all the time, where the will suddenly interposed and found things to do, even when there weren't things to do, in a kind of shame of surrendering to real outer time. Nothing was left to the silence here, the big rhythms outside had no chance, there was only the personal will grinding unharmoniously and breaking the evening up, breaking it inwardly, even without outward signs, breaking it from inside so that even though people might sit there in exactly the same way as they did in Basrah ~~yet~~ there was something broken underneath, some nervous disturbance like a little voice saying, 'Well, to bed now, to work now, back to immediate life now, back to our will, to a cup of doffee, tea, a drink, a stroll.' And even though there might have been more tea-drinking in Basrah, more strolling and ~~xxxxxxx~~ perhaps more real work, yet the real inner silence was shattered as it here.

But it was a good evening. It was good to be back! His first feeling of foreboding and horror, the night before, was gone---obviously a left-over from the dark Basrah-world. After all, one didn't stab one's sister to death here, with small cuts, if she turned prostitute, one didn't hang political prisoners by their neck ~~from~~ in the main square and leave them on display for three hours afterwards, the children didn't catch little birds here and use them as kites by tying their feet to a long

piece of string and then let them flutter up and down helplessly! No^e, it was a different world and he'd better realise it quickly! Thank God a little sanity had returned to him, so soon, after only a day back! Those cars outside, for instance---he'd really stopped breathing when he saw them from the taxi, his heart had suddenly beat so fast that he thought his head was going to burst! Extraordinary!

No, there was peace here. Order. That took time to learn again. He had to try and keep out those hot, stampeding thoughts that came to him from the Basrah-world---the things could be talked about here, bring them into the light! No shadows, no carrion-scandal, no hidden, foul spot!

He felt warmed and healthy and full of life all the way through, and he bounded upstairs to get Pinkie and himself a cup of cocoa while the others got ready for bed in the attic room. Hurrah! Pinkie was putting on new pillow-cases. Thank God life wasn't the nightmare one tried to ambush it into! No, it was more mysterious---the mystery wasn't only dark, there was light as well! Yes! He boiled the milk and mixed the cocoa ~~with xxxxxxxx~~---the kitchen was so neat and colourful, the light glowed so nicely over everything, the boards under his feet bumped so intimately as they'd always done---he was back, back! He could dance round the room! Back out of the shadows! Hanni was right! Back to people who talked their lives over---who loved their freedom and other people's! To people who loved the light! And he bore two steaming cups of cocoa down to the bedroom.

"That looks good, little mouse!"

"Rather!" he said, putting them down on the mantelpiece.

"I'll elect you king of the cocoa!" she said, banging out the pillows. ~~again~~

"I wouldn't like it every night," he replied, taking his first sip. "Would you?"

"No, it's too sickly! But as a change it's ~~xxx~~ orl right, eh?" She sat down playfully and pushed out her legs, taking her mug from the mantelpiece.

"Yes," she added, gazing before her, "Basrah's all right as a dream but what about being there?"

"Yes, I've been thinking that too!"

"How can ^{one} ever go back?"

"Well, that's the problem!"

And they sat staring before them, leaving the question to look after itself.

Chapter ⁵ ~~4~~.

The house was ^{quiet} ~~silent~~ for the next few days, and his fear that no guests would come ^{seemed} ~~was~~ justified ^{after all.} The bell downstairs never rang, ~~and~~ no one called on the telephone. He even began to miss the cars he'd seen outside on the first evening! ~~He~~ wanted to ask Pinkie if she could re-instate them in some way; but there was ^{still} a silence between them as well, ~~continuing~~, not that it was forced or unnatural, ~~they~~ simply had nothing to say. She did the housework and ~~went~~ shopping, while he ^{sorted} ~~marked~~ out his things and put the attic-room in order, removing the broken glass and fixing in brackets for a new mirror. Once or twice the ~~phone~~ rang, but no voice replied when he picked up the receiver; he suspected that Pinkie was going outside to make her calls, at a ~~phone~~-box round the corner; but he rejected the thought because of the quietness with which she did everything, cooking nice meals as she'd done in Basrah, and otherwise trying on her clothes or mending something. It surprised him that she had no complaints, but he put it down to her being happy at living in London again. He took up his old habits, going round to the library in the morning to browse through travel-books, and searching the music-brochures for a good concert.

He ^{went} ~~paid a visit~~ to the office ^{to try to renew} ~~for the renewal~~ of his contract. But the head of the contracts-department wasn't there, and in any case the contract itself had been mislaid, so he left it. The management

was quite casual about such things. . He could easily sign up again once he was back in Basrah.

They saw more of the Pollockes than ^{before.} ~~anyone else.~~ Gradually his old friendship with Dick, from the training-school days, ^{started again,} ~~was renewed.~~ They went down to Hampton Court and Pollocke ushered ^{them} straight through the dark flat to his famous view, as he'd done on ~~the occasion of~~ their first visit, ~~a few years before.~~ The river looked ^{peaceful.} ~~splendid.~~ It was wide and flat, running quite swiftly, and the fields on the other side looked ^{were a} ~~fantastically~~ ^{green} vivid in the last light. ~~It was certainly a view to be proud of;~~ Pollocke was watching him with a little gleam in his eyes, and murmured, "It's worth coming for, isn't it?" And Granville, remembering Hanni's complaints about it, nodded in an awkward way.

The flat was ^{just} ~~exactly~~ as he remembered it. There was little furniture and no books that he could see. It was grim and cold. But the river shone outside and filled the sitting room with light. Pinkie and Hanni seemed to get on well. They disregarded the view and sat talking over a gas-fire in the tiny kitchen, ^{at the back of the flat.} ~~Hanni confided~~

in her quietly, sitting stiffly in her chair, talking ^{gift} rather through her teeth as she always did. She had a ~~great power~~^{one} of intimacy, and one could see Pinkie was lulled and drawn in.

Pollocke began calling at the house after work, sometimes just for a cup of tea before ^a the theatre, and Hanni stayed ^{one} week-end alone, helping with the meals. She and Pinkie ~~seemed to~~^{ed} talk about Dick quite a lot when he wasn't there. They would close the kitchen door, and Granville would hear their voices, low-pitched. He enjoyed the thought of this feminine intimacy. It gave the house a safe and warm feeling. ~~The four of them were the inner circle of the group.~~ Pollocke played darts with Glenning ^{the publicity-man,} at a pub in the Commercial Road, and sometimes they all went there, sitting in the public bar, where there were long wooden benches and bare wooden tables. It was an unimpassioned sort of life and he could find no trace of his first fears, ^{that first evening.}

^{Yet they were there - in his tissues, asleep for the moment.}
c.c. And He never felt really at ease with Pollocke, ^{however,} It was a strange relation. The talk had to be constructed all the time. This was Pollocke's manner; it set the tone. Granville felt himself under an obligation when he was with ^{Dick} ~~him~~ to ~~present~~^{present} himself, through talk, in a tidy and clean frame. He rarely said whatever came into ~~this~~ head; ~~with Pollocke~~ when he did he had a sense of regret afterwards as if he'd exposed himself naked. It had been the same at training school. Pollocke would walk palely at his side, gazing down with his twinkling eyes, affectionate and whimsical, and the spontaneous talk was ^{always} ~~always~~ about to begin: ~~but there was always the stiff effort of communicating which couldn't be relaxed for a moment.~~ ^{but there was always the stiff effort of} They never got beyond themselves for a moment. Yet at the same time this effort was a pleasure; beyond ^{lay} it ~~seemed to lie~~ a mystery; one day the curtain ^{would} ~~might~~ be drawn aside! ~~So~~ There was the pleasure of waiting, ~~again~~ ^{for each other.} tremulous and full of respect,

One Saturday they took a boat out from Hampton Court, just the

two of them, and rowed towards Marlowe, in still, sun-lit, misty weather. Pleasure steamers passed them and Dick waved his hand in a jolly way, making a burlesque of it. He rowed steadily, in shirt-sleeves, shifting the boat along at quite a pace. And he seemed to watch everything as if it were a passing scene only, passing him like the fields and pleasure steamers, while he was motionless, judging it all as a good or bad performance: ^{he was the} ~~a~~ ^{careless} ~~amused~~ spectator. That was how he listened to Granville's talk as well, considering ~~it~~ ^{whatever he said} in a judicious way, from afar. And there was something pleasurable in this, too, because it made one feel master of the world, ^{mental} Life was the subject of a continual ^{one} essay, so to speak; ^{-even real-} nothing disastrous ^{could} happen. It gave ^a heady sense of freedom. At the same time it wasn't natural.

Granville looked at ^{Dick} ~~him~~ from the other end of the boat, at his cool, very light eyes as he squinted against the sun, scanning the banks, slowly, ^{with} and his mouth ~~that~~ ^{had} less clarity than his eyes, bulging slightly, ~~with~~ an odd soft decisiveness about it. He couldn't get a sign from Dick's face of what a sort of person he was. His beard, thin and fair, stirring a little at the edges with the breeze, was like a disguise he'd put on ^{just} ~~very hastily~~ that morning. It hid the lines round his mouth so that he seemed to be faintly smiling all the time, though he probably wasn't. At the same time his face was youthful and without ~~the slightest~~ calculation or deceit ^{in it}. There was something innocent in his eyes; they were never sharp, much less fierce, but looked at everything with a lingering, uninquisitive good will. They were what had first ^{struck} Granville at the training school: he ^{had} looked into Pollocke's light-blue eyes, so amused and boyish, and simply discovered friendship there, though the friendship ^{had} petered out.

They spent all day on the river. Some of the chumminess from

in control
with one's
mind.

the training school days came back, and they moored up at a pub to get some beer. They played croquet on the lawn until it was dark. This meant rowing back without lights, and there was no moon. It was exciting, going close to the bank all the time, with silence all round. Sometimes they would steer into the reeds by mistake and Pollocke would laugh, still master of the world. And they made calm little remarks to each other all the time, enjoying the possibility of danger. The oars made a soft, hollow splash, ^{and} then the water trickled off them as they feathered back. It took three or four hours, and they arrived exhausted. All the shops were closed and no one was in Pollocke's flat, so they took a train to Waterloo and went home to Chaworth Road. Hanni was there with Pinkie, just finishing a meal, so there was a ~~pleasant~~ little party, with Pollocke describing the row back in burlesque terms, ^{Two} and extra beds were fixed up. This evening ~~together~~ put the christening touch to their friendship, and the four of them were ^{how} secure together, ^{more or less}.

If Granville spoke earnestly about anything Pollocke would ^{seem} ~~remain~~ unmoved and ~~wordy~~ gaze before him as if saying ^{to himself}, "I enjoy your performance, but I don't necessarily agree with what you say." The result was that Granville took to performing a little in his company, preparing his sentences before he spoke them and turning a nice phrase whenever he would. And the usual outlet was humour. They both enjoyed a laugh; it provided ^a ~~the~~ relief from the effort.

Age was an obsession with Dick. He felt the approach of thirty like a death-sentence. He did press-up exercises in the morning; and when they were on the river together he ~~had~~ insisted on rowing all the time. His hips were slim like a boy's. Granville was also aware of his youth disappearing. But in Dick it was an acute panic.

"I can tell you, old sport," he would say softly, "I lie in bed sometimes and sweat, just at the passing of old daddy time. I know

it's just a crisis. When I get over the border, on to the other side of thirty, it'll be all right, I suppose."

He would suddenly go into a dance in the middle of the room, flinging his legs out frantically, ~~much as if he was~~^{as if} trying to jump back ~~bodily~~^{his} into ~~his~~^{his} youth. Or he would leap out of a chair after being still for some time and start pottering about with something, biting his lip, horrified at the passing of time, ~~in the silence~~.

He would notice the marks of age, or youth, in Granville, too.

"I swear you look five years younger today," he would murmur, looking at him with admiration. "I don't know how you do it, captain. And two days ago you looked as if the hounds of hell were after you."

h.p. [And another time Dick said to him, "I can feel myself slowing up" ~~he said once~~ "It's a message being flashed to me." You know, the old limbs sink down in that

ital chair---woof---" He made a soft, blowing noise, spreading his hands out. "And I'm not getting the same kick out of things. I need less sleep, too. Sometimes I get out of bed in the morning feeling like a wiry old man."

He ~~was~~^{ed} always ~~frank like this~~^{whatever} describing in a clear and succinct way ~~exactly what he felt~~^{as if he was} ~~as if he was talking about another~~^{He made himself sound like} person, who while of absorbing interest was ~~remote~~^{also} from him. He gave a map of himself all the time, ranging over it freely, half-amused, just as one might be amused by ~~a person~~^{somebody on the street} ~~stranger~~. And he was always still and calm when he talked about himself. He seemed to be listening for signs of new movement in himself, ~~and~~^{hushed and absorbed}. So while he talked about himself there was no sense that he might be egocentric. ~~The phenomenon of himself~~^{Dick} was as interesting for Granville as it was for ~~him~~^{Dick himself. It was} a third object between them.

Hanni 'bored' him, he said one evening, adding, "As any woman you're going to live with should!" He talked about how he'd met her

first, at the Copthall Avenue office, when she was doing a temporary interpreter's job there. "She looked ghastly, such a bloody school-marm, ~~and~~ her eyebrows meeting in the middle like ^{some} black cigar across her face! Thank Christ my secretary doesn't look like that, I thought! Then I went back for more the day after, like a fool! And, well---" He paused to smile. It was a curiously theatrical ~~gesture~~ ^{gesture} "she offered me the cigar and I liked it."

"Were you in love with her?" Granville asked him.

Pollocke was silent, ~~for a time~~ ^{clear} as always when he was asked a ~~frank~~ ^{clear} question, wanting to give it ^{his} completely open and free consideration, then he answered ^{firmly} in a firm voice, ~~his eyes clear~~, "Yes, I was."

"Had you been in love with anybody else?"

And again there was a pause, followed by a firm, "No!"

Another time Dick said his life was in two parts, one ~~his~~ ^{after-work} his work and the other 'after-work.' He could quite happily devote himself to the ^{only} ~~latter entirely~~ ^{only, exclusively} provided he got enough sun. His work meant nothing to him, really! He was at least a 'beach-boy,' he said.

"That's why I'm conscientious," he said. "It's like doing a crossword puzzle. I like everything in place." He paused, quite still, his hands resting easily on his lap and his legs folded. "I suppose that's why I shall get on. I know I shall! The directors think I'm wizard. I'm pretty certain I'll be one of them in a few years time. I'm not handicapped by strong feelings on any of the issues. I keep an even keel."

It didn't sound ~~at all~~ cynical. His eyes were amused, gazing across the music-room at Granville, ~~was~~ blue and still. He was talking about a performance, quite simply.

When they were rowing together ^{that} on the Saturday afternoon he suddenly looked up at the sky with a twinkle and said, "Charlie God's putting up quite a decent show today, isn't he?"

Dick always

ital

And ~~he~~ described points of strong feeling with more deliberate calm and style than ^{Merise} ~~usual~~. On the way back to Waterloo, after their long, blind row in the dark, he murmured to him, "Well, I don't know about you, Sergeant-Major, but I was an ant-heap of nerves in that boat! I thought we were going to strike a mine ~~at~~ any minute. The old knees were knocking together like casta nets!"

He ~~seemed to stand~~ ^{stood} to one side of his own life, a ^{kind of} musing, wistful, ~~sometimes~~ puzzled, and heroic companion. It was perhaps the ^{touch} ~~sense~~ of devil-may-care courage ~~bravery~~ that warmed Granville most. He was never really at ease with Dick, they 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 ^{Barral} ~~Mosul~~. 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. ~~She had offended something in him.~~ He often seemed to recoil slightly when she was in an extravagant mood ^{or} talking in a resounding and patrician way like her father. Servants, as it turned out, were a sore subject with ^{Dick} ~~him in any case~~. Hanni told Pinkie later that he refused even to have a char in, because it offended his principle that ^{of any kind} ~~serving others~~ was wrong.

In fact, they'd had three servants in ^{Barral} ~~Mosul~~---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

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did nearly all the cooking and gave her long hours off-duty. Bertha was an Assyrian, ^{like Hami,} 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 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~~ 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

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told Bertha she ~~sh~~ 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 ^{showing him to} always thought ~~she sent him away because~~ ^{'Duty' - as Bertha said he was!} she was ashamed of the guests ^{settling eyes on him}. 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. ~~Granville knew these would have been his own feelings as well.~~ ^{she} 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 ~~leaning on her and~~ ^{taking} expecting 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 ^{shake} ~~aid~~ 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 soigné 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 Olsmobiles, kicking up the dust, their chauffeurs cursing at the pedestrians. The doctors, lawyers and government officials ^{formed an impenetrable} ~~made a~~ ~~under~~ sink of corruption, ~~it was impossible to penetrate~~. There was also a host of small, neglected men with revolvers in their ^{belts} ~~holsters~~ who were said to be in the pay of Russia and were preparing 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. And ^{They} ~~he and Mohammed~~ went home and cooked a huge musguf, that tasted like cod, in the garden, propping 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} ~~the necessity~~ of ~~his~~ ^{for his own development} his ~~Barah~~ ^{Barah} ~~Modul-experience~~ purified and justified his stay.

Quite suddenly, in the grounds of Hampton Court one afternoon, after they and the Pollockes had had lunch together, he turned to Pinkie and said, "Suppose I go back to Basrah alone? Shall I?"

Hanni and Dick were a little behind them. He'd little idea how these words ^{came} ~~had come~~ into his head. But they ~~seemed to~~ cause ^{her} (no surprise ~~in her~~).

"Yes," she said, gazing loosely into the distance. They were standing at the edge of the lake, with the massive, red palace behind ^{But} them. Then she asked, "What would you do for a woman?"

"I could go to the brothel," he said at once, hoping to catch Dick's ear; but ^{Dick was} ~~he didn't~~ kissing Hanni's ~~own~~ neck.

He glanced at her. She didn't appear offended. She only smiled in a crooked and slightly defensive way. The whole afternoon, still and dark, with thunder in the distance, was strange. They stood together, looking before them at the shining water, and spoke as if they had no control over their words at all. Dick and Hanni were near by, arm in arm, whispering something to each other; they tended to play lovers rather a lot for a married couple. ~~Granville thought irritably~~

"I wouldn't mind being out of that atmosphere for a bit," Pinkie went on. "All those bloody pot-bellied sheikhs---" She gave a glance towards Hanni, as if wanting to catch her attention in the same way as he'd tried for Dick's. And Hanni did look across at her, blinking.

^{-Cal} "Like a pack of old women! They were the ones who did all the talking!"

"Oh, the clerks did it as well," he murmured, getting more irritated. Dick also was looking at them now, and it seemed that all four of them were fixed together in the still afternoon, their wills paralysed and involved together, enacting a situation ^{out of} ~~beyond~~ their ^{control.} ~~grasp~~.

"But the sheihks went in for all the male-honour talk, didn't they?" she cried. "Calling you 'my brother' and all that?"

"Well," he said quietly, uncertain of himself, "you can't laugh away all honour--"

ital

"But why male honour? What about my honour as well?" Her eyes were flashing.

He flared up as well. "But there's some difference between a man and a woman!"

"Why?" Dick asked in a crisp way. Granville turned round as if he'd heard ~~the crack of a whip~~ a shot fired, so strange was the new voice, like the cracking of a twig before a storm. "I don't think there's any difference!"

"What?" Granville asked, his throat dry. "No difference between a man and a woman?"

"No." Dick spoke deliberately, his lips pursed. "Their bodies are different, ^{that's all,} ~~of course~~"

ital

"But our bodies aren't separate from us!" Granville cried, quite roused. ^{now} "They're only an expression, just a part! It's a whole difference!" The others were silent. "Why don't men have babies, then, and do the cooking, and everything a woman does?"

^{Because} "Because they're physically different," said Dick, spacing out his words slowly and carefully, gazing down at the water.

"Men do cook," Hanni daid, "quite often!"

ital

"So when we go to bed with our women," he burst out, "we go to bed with our sisters or friends?"

He had no idea what he meant himself and the others laughed. Pinkie looked happy again. He stood there blinking and confused, trying to make sense of his own words, and the others laughed even more.

"A body ^{isn't} just something you can touch," he went on, trying to pick up the thread. "It isn't all of a person---" But the argument was gone.

"Anyway," Pinkie murmured, "all this is only because I felt like having a dance one night. I suppose you'd have liked me to go and

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have some illicit sex with a diplomat one afternoon while you were at work, like half the other English and American wives! Your male honour would have been intact ^{then!}."

She only broke the subject again because they were in company. And it stirred the old fire in him.

"Oh, for God's sake," he shouted, "just because you want a dance it doesn't mean you have to have one, does it?" His voice drifted across the gardens. "This male honour started just because men didn't do what they wanted to all the time!"

"That's because they could do what they wanted to all the time! And a woman can't!" She waved her hand blindly, with her strange half-smile, that was both defiant and hurt. "If I go and sit in a cafe alone I've got men staring me up and down, even here---and as for ^{Barred} ~~Mosul~~---!"

"Oh," he said, "a woman adjusts herself to that all right if she means business."

"If she's ugly, you mean!"

And there the argument ended. He forced the anger out of himself. And to judge by the set look on Pinkie's face, ~~making~~ making her look older, she was doing the same.

Then, later, she squeezed his arm and said with a chuckle, "I'll give you 'male honour.' You're just like old Waffle-Waffle."

'Waffle-Waffle' was ^{her} ~~Pinkie's~~ grandfather, who'd married 'Aunt Beatrice.' 'Aunt' was a courtesy title because Beatrice was much younger than ^{Waffle-Waffle} ~~he was~~. She was a flashing, red-haired woman with ~~quite~~ a sharp, ~~and sometimes~~ ribald wit, and 'Waffle-Waffle' was ^{a naval} ~~an army~~ man. ^{He} ~~He~~ thought she had grand style, and ^{always} ~~would chuckle~~ ^{Beatrice} ~~at her~~, giving her ~~as free a hand as she wanted.~~ ~~He had a delightful nature and~~ ^{The name} ~~Really~~ he worshipped her. / Waffle-Waffle came from the way he spoke, ^{being} ~~and it was~~ 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 ~~was~~ 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, ~~xxxxxxx~~ 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 ^{softest and} the 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.

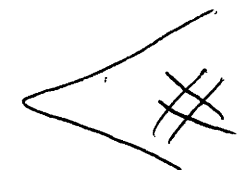
She didn't see much of Nigel these days. He lived more and more in the country, and spent a lot of his time hanging round the stables talking horseflesh. He was a tall, fair-haired man with rosy cheeks and broad shoulders, his eyes much like Pinkie's except that they were steady and searching, with a constant smile in them. He had the same rash and daredevil

End of book

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 alone. Once, when his battalion was dug in for some static battle, in the Ardennes, he left the trench in daylight and cleared an enemy post with one grenade. He then sat down with a pipe and started reading Dryden's translations from Horace. He told someone afterwards that when his own men found him he was reading the line, 'Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today', and was thinking that he'd never had such a day and probably never would!



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and now, with the help of her son, she ran a finishing-school for girls in Mayfair. Z
had a son and two daughters by him. Granville had the impression that
Derick Grysham, ^{the} her son, didn't quite accept him as a member of the fam-
ily, in so far as there was definite family left. In the other Grysh-
ams, like Nigel and Pinkie's father, there was certain blindness to the
details of other people's lives and backgrounds. But Derick and his
mother had the scrutinising quality. They stood like sentinels on the
edge of the family, watching the new entrants, so it seemed. Beatrice
was described by Pinkie's father as 'more Grysham than the Gryshams',
and Pinkie herself said this was because Beatrice came from a big soap-
manufacturing family and wanted to 'keep the aristocratic slate clean'
now she was married 'on to' it. #

Not a word more was said between Pinkie and Granville on the sub-
ject of 'affairs'. He found out from Hanni that the name of the pale
young man he'd seen using the telephone on the first evening was Grove.
But no one else mentioned the name. Nor did Grove appear again.
Pinkie never went out at unusual times. The matter was left unexplored,
as always between them. But circumstances were piling up: there was
the incident with the clerk from Kirkuk, there was the beating he'd
given her afterwards, there was the party she'd just given in his ab-
sence, there was the role of Grove, there was the baby. All these
were now barred from conversation; slowly they were forming an encamp-
ment. But sometimes these things appeared simply bare incidents to
him, without a theme behind them at all; and again he wondered at the
extravagance of his ^{own} thinking.

He wanted to ask Dick what had been 'going on' in his absence,
but he didn't ^{want} ~~wish~~ to appear petty or jealous before him, if only be-
cause Dick seemed to regard him as a carefree person. He did try it
in an oblique way. He asked him how he thought Pinkie was these days;
did she seem 'the same Pinkie' he'd known at training-school?---just as
if he was concerned about her ^{very} objective. And Dick seemed to under-
stand.

stand what was in his mind, ^{because} ~~for~~ ^{just} he ~~simply~~ looked straight ahead, his lips pursed slightly and his eyes ~~deliberately~~ unblinking, and said, "Yes", then closed his lips ~~again~~ ^{wanted} as if he never ~~wished~~ to open them again. A chill apprehension ran through Granville, because this made it clearer than before that there was something to hide.

During his talks to Hanni he tried to find out more, but that was even less hopeful, because her gaze was more watchful than Dick's, and seemed to pick ^{up} his moods more subtly; so whenever Pinkie came into the conversation he made it seem that he had no doubts about her, and that on the contrary there was the greatest confidence ^{between} ~~between~~ them; he even wanted to give the impression that he was carefree and tolerant about 'affairs'---that would be his position, from the public point of view, if he found out that there ^{had been} ~~were~~ any. Also he was afraid that Pinkie was innocent, in which case his suspicions would sew a bad seed in other people's minds unnecessarily. ~~Sometimes when he and Hanni were together they seemed to him like two refugees, stranded on the same island; on the other hand, she seemed more aware of Dick's life than he was of Pinkie's; and she talked about Dick more freely, while he was always afraid of appearing disloyal to Pinkie.~~ ^{n.p.} ~~He~~ thought of the other three as evasive and mute, but he was the one least capable of breaking into speech.

He learned through Glenning, the publicity-man, that Dick was 'a one for the girls', and instantly felt a twinge of admiration combined with disapproval; or perhaps the disapproval was only moral envy--he couldn't tell. Glenning told him in the pub one evening when they were alone that Dick had borrowed his flat the previous week 'to do a secretary'; he talked about it in a genial, amused way as if Dick was famous for that kind of thing. When Dick came into the pub later Glenning looked up at him and said, "That girl of yours---do you realise she left some of her feathers and an egg behind in my bed?" Dick's

mouth fell open for a moment and he looked frightened, but then he laughed and sat down easily at Glenning's side, murmuring that he'd always thought the girl 'a bit of a hen'.

Hanni and Pinkie were together in the kitchen one day at one of their tête-à-têtes, with the door closed, when he happened to pass on his way to the attic-room and suddenly heard the name 'Grove', followed by a lowering of voices; their voices made a quiet rasping on the air, no more than a whisper. The idea formed in his head quite conclusively as he stood on the landing between the two rooms with his heart beating fast and his mouth open, that she was in love with Grove. He went on to the attic-room and tried to work on the new mirror, but his hands trembled so much that he decided to lie down. Their voices were now normal again, a spasmodic humming on the other side of the wall. He heard Hanni laugh. It was such a comfortable and easy laugh, ~~that~~ so without any conspiratorial note, that he thought he must be wrong; he tried to reconstruct the sentence in which 'Grove' had occurred, but he couldn't remember the other sounds; perhaps the word had been 'mauve'? Also it was possible that they had been talking kitchen-^aaffairs, and had said 'stove'. But kitchen-affairs weren't to the taste of either of them, as he knew. ~~But~~ later Hanni opened the door and went downstairs to look for some cigarettes, and he realised from the sounds that they were cooking something together, perhaps one of Pinkie's French dishes, so that the word might indeed have been 'stove'. He got up again and went on with the mirror, revived more or less, but he couldn't get the thought out of his mind.

Not for five or six days after his arrival did he touch Pinkie. His raw desire, that had glared at him in Basrah like the sun itself, sickly and dangerous, had withered into a kind of local, urban itch.

END R. B. S. (u)

But the idea persisted. It had become a medical idea, probably a wrong one---that the glands were full and needed their release whether he felt real desire or not. So he watched Pinkie with interest, hoping to decoy her. She was unaware of it, but after nearly a week, seeming to feel a mild curiosity about him, as to where he had put his glandular fluids if not in her, she kissed him in a significant way and they began scrambling about as they always did when their desires were low. But the flame revived in him, and slowly the enormous, pitiless image that had hardly left him for a moment in Basrah returned, and even united with her briefly, until he had a shocked, ~~paroxysm~~ sparse orgasm that failed to involve most of his body, touching only nerve-ends, not the centre; he was still wide-awake after it, and they lay together numbed, sad, continents away from each other. Pinkie's orgasm was a private event, distant from him. It wracked her middle for a moment, a small shudder that touched her stomach and died, like an awful vision that made her close her eyes and screw up her mouth painfully for a moment, and lose herself in an infinite sea of self. The act only confirmed them in their separateness from each other; it left them ^{with more} ~~free of~~ desires ^{than before} ~~which was better than the other state~~ ^{but nothing local.} ~~It was remarkable that sometimes Pinkie had~~ ^{had never} felt desire for him.

~~He could remember it.~~ It had always happened when he'd been away for some time. She gave the impression of trembling slightly, he remembered, and of being sensitive to the timbre of his voice. But this desire was always spoiled in the fulfilment. Usually it died the moment he touched her. But this time there hadn't even been the desire.

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Steel chapter 7

Chapter 7.

Later in the week, after a quiet 'phone-call, Pinkie announced she was going back to her job at ^{her brother's} ~~her brother's~~ firm.

^{He} ~~Grenville~~ was staggered. The firm had moved to the other side of London; it would mean travelling to Wembley every day, an hour or more!

"We don't need the money," he said.

"Oh, I just want a change. Everybody else is working, after all."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, all our friends!"

~~He could only think of those Dick, Harold and Catherine.~~

The following Monday she got up at seven and he made tea for her as once she'd made it for him, two years before. She looked neat and contented, with a spotted silk scarf tucked into her ^{blue} neck. She wore her best high-heeled shoes, which she had polished carefully, and a tight grey skirt that made her look tall and slim. ~~Her face had no trace of childishness.~~ And she sucked her forefinger now and then, just touching it with the tip of her tongue, gazing down, as she did when she was making a silent calculation of some kind. She was quite remote from him. She could have been a young girl off to her ^{first} job, with a dance to go to in the evening.

"I thought you liked being free," he said.

"I do." She gazed down, her face closed to him, and wouldn't say

h.p. any more. ^{then} [Ever since ~~she'd announced her intention of working again~~ he'd been trembling more or less; he could settle to nothing; his clear thoughts were gone. He watched her now across the breakfast table as he'd been watching her for several days past. He tried to look into her eyes but she turned them away quickly. And when their eyes did meet ~~her~~ her's were blind. She left ^{for} the office as if they were strangers, looking both more of a girl and older, too. Her face was set like that of a hard-willed young girl; yet even so the softness showed through, in the texture of her skin.

~~It felt like the close of an episode.~~ The beating he'd given her had changed her, he told himself, ~~she would never forget it, it had made her hard.~~ Had she said anything to Hanni about ^{it?} ~~that beating?~~ ^{Had} ~~Did~~ she and Hanni ^{made} ~~make~~ this feminine plan together, that she should go to work and leave him ^{isolated?} ~~isolated?~~ He felt surrounded by heartlessness; he'd ~~had~~ noticed a hard look in Hanni's face as well, when he was talking about 'male honour' in the gardens of Hampton Court. But in a moment the idea of a 'feminine plan' seemed absurd. ~~How much more of a woman Pinkie had looked when she left the house?~~ ^{ones} Her softness towards him had gone. He sat at the same position in front of the breakfast table all morning, numbed and half-trembling. But it was a state that went on underneath, like a natural ~~af~~function of his body. And it wasn't unpleasurable. It was a state of excitement and suspense; what did the future hold?

l.c. itali After this he was alone in the house most days. It was agreeable at first, as he got used to the idea of her working and it seemed only another aspect of a plain and obvious world. She left at the same hour every morning, and came back looking rather pale and tired in the evening wanting her dinner, which he now prepared for her. It continued to be exciting. There were things to talk about: she ^{had} ~~would have~~ stories about the office and how Nigel was ~~doing~~ these days. He was coming over

to dinner soon, she said. ~~And they must both go down to Wiltshire~~
~~for a week-end. Nigel looked older and perhaps more worried, but the~~
~~smile hadn't left his eyes, she added.~~ It made a tremendous differ-
ence to her, being close to Nigel every day. ^{So Grenville thought.} Her confidence came back
and she talked more readily. There was a healthy little flush in her
cheeks and they were affectionate and natural with each other as they
hadn't been for a year or more. He began to think ^{that} ~~of~~ her working was
a good bargain. It took her out of herself and he got his privacy.
She didn't lean on him as she'd done in Basrah.

But they slept together less. She was tired and refused him.
Desire wracked and gnawed at him, and sometimes he yearned for her the
whole day much as he'd done in Basrah during the last month there.
When she came back in the evening his approach would be too overwhelm-
ing and direct for her, because he was pent-up. He felt an 'orang-
utang' in his sex ~~as well~~, as he'd done on many occasions before ~~with~~
~~her~~. She shrank from him. The heat of his hands, his breath, the
closeness of his eyes, ^{seemed to} ~~induced~~ panic ~~in~~ her, ~~it seemed~~. Usually he
knew how to avoid this, and approached her in a quiet, deliberately
unconcerned ^{light} ~~and even humorous~~ way, not kissing her too earnestly or
touching her too heavily ^{at first}. He would fondle her very softly, like some-
one in a dream, while her eyes closed: this aroused her most, when the
touches were ~~almost~~ abstract, coming from anywhere, in a dimness, his
fingers not his but detached like things in a dream. First this dim-
ness and silence had to be entered, softly and circumspectly, then her
passion grew. He had to cancel himself out at first, ~~withholding the~~
~~real strength of his arms~~, withholding his breath and his ^{real} ~~own~~ passions.
^{That was the routine he'd learned with her.} But now he'd been kept in leash too long. He'd spent hours thinking
about her breasts and hips, ~~and~~ imagining voluptuous movements ~~with~~
~~her~~. But the occasion didn't offer itself. She was tired and locked
away from him, thin-lipped and perplexed, while he was half-prostrate

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with desire. There was always this disharmony between them when the desire was too strong in him. ^{Suddenly} But then she turned to him one evening after they'd (one to bed and put in hand between his legs. and their moods coincided, in a manner that was beyond them both. It was quite like 'Stratford'. And he was once more quiet; ^{of course,} presumably, the desire would ~~once more~~ build up in him again and his ^{he knew that. He} anxious concern would grow with it. ^{feared it - yet it was all the more exciting, because he couldn't satisfy it easily.}

Hanni happened to get an afternoon off and dropped in one day. She cooked a meal with him and they went for a walk afterwards. They'd never really spoken to each other freely before, not in the way the new friendship between the four of them demanded.) ~~She was naturally stiff, from shyness, tremulously aware of her own movements, to the point of self-paralysis, it seemed.~~ This was particularly so when he looked at her, following her with his sharp eyes. ^{this time} But ~~gradually~~ she began to talk ^{a confident way,} to him as he'd seen her talk to Pinkie, in a ~~pleasantly intimate and confidential way,~~ ^{yet all the more intimate because} keeping her mouth tense and half-closed, even as she spoke. ^{of that.} A certain sadness prevailed ~~all~~ her talk. It was always there, like keening. She seemed to be mourning something, ^{in a reminiscent way---} ~~someone else's~~ ^{someone's} disloyalty, ^{of} the pain of ^{being} ~~misunderstanding.~~ ^{odd,} ~~And she~~ spoke in a monotone, ~~her face unmoving,~~ ^{very} her eyes still under her straight, black eyebrows, ^{that seemed to} like a thick line across her brow, ^{a frightened expression.} ~~fixing~~ her eyes in the way of someone frightened. She was, ~~indeed,~~ ^{Of} frightened! ~~English society would never be quite familiar to her.~~ ^{land, mostly. And of Dick's - would, too.} ~~And she didn't~~ know how much of herself to give. She ^{was afraid} ~~feared~~ that if she gave too much she would be ^{people would think her} ~~revealed as~~ a poor, imitating, colonial ^{sort of} person; ^{or} a ~~simple~~ 'family-woman', which Pollocke wouldn't allow her to be! [Her feet were tiny, ^{Granville} he ^{along,} noticed as they walked, she was like a little girl, with an old burden of sadness that made her stiff, unjustly.

Her mother was Assyrian but her father English. He ^{had been} ~~had~~ been a political officer before marriage and ^{had been} ~~was~~ sent by the Foreign Office to Kurdistan on a special mission after the 1914 war, when the Kurds were resisting the idea of sharing Iraq

with the Arabs, ~~and wanted their own nations~~. He was a straight-backed young ~~Englishman~~ at that time and was known to have a way with the Kurdish tribes. He could trust himself to their hospitality in lonely mountain villages, at a time when a number of the political officers were getting bullets in their backs. He met Hanni's mother in Kirkuk and after their marriage they settled near by in a village.

Hanni reminded him of Bertha ~~in a trifling way~~. They had the same watchful air, as if ~~their~~ immediate personal dignity was the most important thing for them. Only when ~~Hanni~~ ^{she} talked softly and intimately was she ^e really herself. At other times, especially when there were people about, she seemed to be concentrating on the form of ^{the} conversation ^{and} not ~~at all~~ ^{on} ~~actually~~ what was said.

He told her a little about ~~Bertha~~ ^{the woman}, how she despised Kath'm and hated it if he served at table, which he did whenever Granville was eating alone. And to his surprise Hanni didn't shut herself up, as she usually did when the Middle East was mentioned.

"Oh, yes," she replied with a curiously tired look, touched with irritability, "I know her type all right!"

"She keeps a bible in the sitting room."

She nodd(ed). "We kept a bible, too!"

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It had been in the family for generations, she said, and ~~was~~ always ~~kept~~ ^{lay} on a lace mat in the ~~sitting~~ corner of the sitting room, but without ^a the silver-plated crucifix. She hated the village where she was born. ~~All her tiredness, like an ancient stress, came out when she talked about this.~~ ^{working the village} She described the tiny front room with its stuffed owl in a glass case and its imitation-English furniture. Over the mantelpiece there ^{had} been gilt-framed pictures of the King and Queen and the Prince of Wales. It was ^{schash} a deliberate ^{incarnation} of Victorian England. He was struck by the phrase and threw her a quick glance, realising she ^{was} ~~must be much~~ more articulate than ~~he'd~~

trading company from Beirut, where she had set up home. As a young wife she'd gone to London specially to give birth to Hanni, determined she should be English through and through. And then Hanni had been sent to school in England, from the time she was ten.

But it was still impossible to see inside Hanni from all this; as soon as they were with other people again her stiffness, that was more an ancient ~~kind of~~ dignity turned to a modern social use, came back, and everything he said to her was once more like a message flashed across the sea. Her face hardly moved and she made only staccato little statements; perhaps only with Pollocke was she ^{Dick, alone,} ~~seen~~ ^{revealed} in truth. ~~Calley seen.~~

Dick as good as said this one day.

"I could write volumes about that girl," he said. "She's like a ~~wonderful~~ South Sea island---with the storms thrown in, of course!" he added facetiously.

Hanni, ^{he added,} ~~Dick said,~~ wasn't a talker. She was only known through her silences. "My book," he said with a ^{simply} charming smile, ~~wonderfully~~ ~~cultivated and open,~~ "would be a book of silence!"

Once or twice she stayed at Chaworth Road for the night, alone, when she didn't expect Dick back at Hampton Court. Apparently, this was ^{a form} ~~some kind~~ of retaliation. She never said what Dick got up to on those evenings away. But it was easy to imagine ^{sex was one} ~~from the way he talked~~ about sex. ^{of his big theme - it went with youth.} ~~It was another of his obsessions, together with youth; the two went together for him.~~

All Hanni said was that it was part of his ^{to stay out all night} policy of independence. She talked a bout Dick ^{him rather} ~~much~~ as she talked about her father, with ^{coolly} ~~coolness~~ and without apparent attachment except ^{a motherly kind -} ~~of a very deep and mystical kind.~~ But her words ~~always~~ left ^{a sting} ~~her~~ sting behind them. She said she ^{had} learned the gift of

stinging gossip early in life. ^{And Granville} ~~Whenever she talked about Dick~~ ^{found himself} ~~began to feel a~~ ^{with} ~~Granville~~ ^{Dick when she talked,} ~~found a~~ burning resentment against him, until he pulled himself up. She spoke in the same flat, unenchanted voice. Some-

times she and Dick ^{looked like} ~~were~~ perfect strangers ^{together,} ~~to each other,~~ and some-
times they ~~seemed~~ ^{were} like young lovers, ~~going over each other in what~~
~~looked like a deliberately performed way.~~ ^{seemed} She said Dick never allow-
ed a loving mood to go on for long. It soon made him feel caught.

He was horrified at the idea that she might require all his attentions;
he was a little like Pinkie in this! ^{And} ~~And~~ he always had a device
ready for keeping her at a distance, like arranging a formal little
dinner-party, just for the two of them, at the Caprice or the Berkeley
Grill. He would ^{phone} ~~phone~~ her from the office and make the formal
~~with a touch of facetiousness and jollity,~~
invitation, and she would get herself up to impress him, ~~quite~~ ^{this} as if

they were new lovers. In a way she enjoyed ~~this~~ ^{this}. The dressing-up was
nice; she felt 'woken up'. And he did want her to look pretty, unlike
the boring men who took their wives for granted! But, still, it was
always a jolt: suddenly she had to behave as if she didn't know him.

She would smile at him across the table, shining in her dress with
the bare shoulders, and ^{Dick would behave as if he'd never seen her} ~~then, slowly, challenging the formality~~
~~before, looking between her breasts with an exciting mixture of distance~~
~~between them in a most exciting way, would come the old touch of love,~~
~~and familiarity.~~ ^{There was the sensuous thrill of}
~~renewed and tremulous from having had a check.~~ He often hurt her
and infuriated her, but in the end she always admired him.

Or he would ^{ask her to go} ~~suggest that she went~~ down to his parents at Harrow
for a few days, just to make the formal break. And he laid it down
as a principle that they must each have at least two evenings a month
to themselves, to go out where they liked and with whom they liked,
and no questions asked. For mutual happiness, she agreed. But she
rarely took up her free evenings. Once or twice, out of loneliness,
she tried to interfere with his but he retaliated at once, with a
extraordinary unrelenting thoroughness: he would spend three or four
evenings out in a row without saying anything. A principle once
agreed on must never be broken. This was absolute with him.

She wanted to furnish the Hampton Court flat properly but he

Sounding
jolly and
facetious,

Being familiar with a stranger!

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wouldn't let her. They all began talking about this one evening and Dick murmured, glancing over at him with a smile, "The furniture'd start staring at me!" He said he wanted a place that offered no 'definitions' of his character. So the flat was as bare as possible. A properly furnished place would make too full a statement about him, he thought.

When she talked about him Hanni always made it seem that she played a meek role, giving in to him for the sake of peace. But behind her level voice there was quite a hard will. Yet this was only an impression. Nothing could be verified from her quiet manner.

She had a good rapport with Dick's mother, ^{whom Dick nicknamed} ~~and often went down to~~ 'Lady Godiva'---his father was 'King Arthur'---and often went down to ~~see them.~~ From what she said they felt a shadow of disappointment ~~Arthur, and the name was accepted that~~

^{over} with their son. He hadn't gone the way they'd mapped out for him.

Dick was amused and offhand about them. But at the same time there was a touch of bitterness in his voice, as if they'd played all sorts of ineffectual tricks on him. His face took on a guarded look when they ^{were} mentioned.

He said he called his mother Lady Godiva because ^{idea her} the story of a ~~woman~~ riding naked on a horse ^{'thrilled' him in wishfully,} had always reminded him ^{ironic} of her, ~~for some reason,~~ while 'King Arthur' was a good title for a man who'd never attempted anything heroic in his life?

^{an 'Dedipoidal way';} It was, perhaps, the ^{(Hanni seemed to (the disappointment))} disappointment that Hanni shared with ~~Dick's mother~~ ^{his mother.} Dick told him one day that she always came back from Harrow with a ^{knowing} specially knowledgeable look in her eyes, as if she ^{could} ~~seen~~ right through him down to his toes.

^{now} "This makes her look like my ^{the old girl!} old mum," he added, "which ^{gives me} since I ^{quite a kick!} always wanted to sleep with her ^{I can then literally fuck my own mother!} when I was a child ^{with laughter} gives me quite a kick! Because here she is---and I can do it!" And he spluttered ^{Hanni} delightfully, ~~in what Dick called his 'tickled-pink manner'.~~

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Granville only heard Dick's parents spoken of by their nicknames. Hanni used ^{these names} ~~them~~ as well. Sometimes Dick would call his father 'King' or 'the King', and his mother 'milady'.

"Milady got on the blower to me this morning," he would say, "and do you know she said she'd just seen me from the top of a bus in High Holborn and I needed a haircut!"

He would smile but with a little twitch in his lips, as if his coolness towards his parents wasn't complete. Mostly ^{he} talked about them as distant characters ^{doing some kind of bad performance} ~~on the horizon, performing badly~~. Granville ^{hadn't} ~~had never~~ met them and saw them only as caricatures, through ^{him} ~~Dick~~. ~~His way of talking about them seemed most unnatural. They were like~~ two mountebanks some of whose fake goods ^{Dick had} ~~he'd~~ been tricked into buying; he knew their game and smiled, but bitterly because they'd caught him. ^{That was the impression.} Nothing they did or said lacked this fraudulent quality. But when Granville asked him one day why he hated them so much he replied, "I don't!"

Lady Godiva, Hanni said, was a small, thin woman with a sharp nose and quick, intelligent eyes, not yet old and still attractive ~~to men~~. She ^{was} ~~wa~~s an Australian and had met King Arthur in Brisbane when she was ~~a girl of~~ ^{had been} seventeen. Their families ~~were~~ in the same business---hotels. She still owned a number of them in Sidney and Brisbane, and King Arthur now managed them together with his English interests, in the same company. He was the son of a ~~more~~ modest hotel-manager who had sent him to Australia to learn the ropes of the trade from the bottom, which he'd done, starting as a bell-boy. He was a tall, erect, kindly man and had one absorbing hobby, building model ships. One of his great private disappointments was leading Dick as a child to ^{one of} ~~one of~~ his most brilliant pieces ^s of work, a vast, gleaming liner with cabins and lounges that had taken him over ^{to build} three years, and hearing him say, "I hate ships, and that goes for all

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models of them, too."

Dick had a horror of the sea and couldn't swim a stroke. Much of his childhood had been spent on boats plying the seas between Southampton and Sidney Harbour. The journey never took less than six weeks and all that time he was cooped up with his parents, an only child, in a first-class cabin. This was usually followed by weeks in a hotel-suite not unlike the cabin. They expected him to join the family-business as a matter of course and perhaps manage the two Brisbane hotels on the spot. But he coolly took a job in T.I.M. without telling them.

Lady Godiva was completely baffled by Dick but wouldn't admit it to herself, Hanni said. She tried to play his game of cool talk but only sounded biting and disdainful. Really she'd taught him the coolness, believing it was true drawing-room style; and a public-school had done the rest.

Slowly Granville was getting to know Dick behind the style. He even began to feel that ^{this style} it was an urgent makeshift to stem the hot tides of feeling inside. But, like Hanni, Dick rarely showed his hand. On the ^{surface} ~~surface~~ he did, giving ~~such~~ a clear map of himself in conversation; but it was only a contour map and gave no real sense of the country.

One evening he did show his hand for a moment. They were sitting in the music-room talking about jealousy, just the two of them. He was at his favourite game, examining a painful and intimate feeling with dauntless and methodical honesty. As always he sat quite still gazing before him, smacking his lips slightly while he thought the matter over, half-smiling, one leg crooked over the other, apparently perfect master of himself, ^{and} above ~~all~~ seeming to take an enormous relish in the existence of his own limbs ^{and in everything he did and said.} That was perhaps the most compelling and attractive thing about ^{Dick's} ~~his~~ company, that he seemed to ^{an immediate physical} ~~take~~ relish in ^{himself, in his position at the time whether} ~~everything his limbs did, and in everything he thought~~

"Yes," Dick went on coolly, "I did it when I found a chap in bed with Hanni---naked as well!" Oh, yes, that was what Hanni had told him the first evening---he remembered. "Or rather, I did it the second time I found him in bed. The first time I stood by the door and made a quivering little speech---which the little man took absolutely no notice of at all! I said, 'This bed has been offered to myself and my wife for the night' (which it had, by Pinkie---you see how principled I am even in my rages?), and I gave him ten minutes to fuck off! Otherwise, I said, I'd have to pull him out!"

It was a funny picture, Dick standing at the door talking like that, and Granville smiled. This seemed an encouragement to Dick and his face fell into more of a repose; a glint of humour came back into his eyes as well, as if by permission from Granville. He'd never behaved so defencelessly before, even years ago at the training school.

m "Did you pull him out?" Granville asked him.

"No! The fellow was still there when I got back. So I smashed the mirror!"

he was standing or ~~and so on~~ sitting down, in all his movements, in the way he put ~~his~~ the tips of his fingers together and tapped them ^{against each other} ever so slightly, and in the continual, slow smacking of his lips. ^{This} ~~It was~~ a self-sufficiency ~~that sometimes~~ made Granville feel quite overshadowed. Dick always seemed to be leaning back with an audience, while ~~Granville felt that~~ ^{himself} he ~~himself~~ was always leaning forward, trying to achieve an audience.

But this time Dick leaⁿed forward and in the most confidential voice said, "You know who broke that mirror upstairs, don't you?"

"No?"

"I did!"

"You didn't!" Granville said with astonishment.

He gazed across at Dick's face, ^{which was} a little flushed and quite without style now, and didn't know how to take him at all. But ^{obviously} it was true: Dick ^{said} ~~told him that~~ he'd done it out of jealousy when he'd found another man in bed with ~~her~~ ^{him}, naked as well! Or rather, he'd done it the second time he'd found the man there, for the first time he stood by the door and made a quivering speech, telling the man, who took no notice at all, that this bed had been offered to himself and his wife for the night---which it had, by Pinkie (Dick was principled even in his rages)---and that he gave him ten minutes to get out of it. Otherwise, he'd have to pull him out. It was a funny picture, Dick standing by the door talking like that, and Granville ^{smiled} ~~burst out~~ laughing. This seemed an encouragement to Dick and his face fell into more of a repose; a glint of humour came back into his eyes as well, as if by permission from Granville. He'd never behaved so defencelessly before, even years ago at the training school.

"Did you pull him out?" ^{Granville} ~~he~~ ^{him} asked.

"No! The fellow was still there when I got back. So I smashed the mirror!"

He said he strode across the room and to his ^{own} horror ~~tore~~ the mirror off the wall and threw it at the window, where it caught the lower ledge and smashed to pieces.

"As a matter of fact," he added, "while I was tearing it off the nail an image of you came into my mind and I thought, 'Poor old Granville, I'm smashing his furniture up!'"

"Oh," Granville said with a smile. "That's all right!"

"I'll pay for it one day."

"No, no, that's damages of war!" They exchanged a friendly, intimate glance that was unusual between them.

Dick hadn't, luckily, thrown the thing at the occupants of the bed. Hanni was sitting up terrified and blinking, her breasts showing over her petticoat, ^{he said.} As for the man, he ^{just} stared at Dick with his mouth open, not grasping what was going on at all. ^{Dick had} Then ~~he~~ flung out of the house and walked the streets for half-an-hour, his legs trembling so violently that he could hardly stand up.

"Were they up to ~~anything~~ ^{any}?" Granville asked ~~involuntarily~~. ^{for simplicity}
~~The question sounded vulgar in front of Dick.~~
~~But he didn't flinch.~~ ⁱⁿ He looked back at him with the most perfect simplicity, like a child, and said with a shrug and a smile,
["I don't know," Dick said with a shrug and a smile. "But he was very fat!"]
"What does she say?"

"She says she was drunk and doesn't remember anything."

~~Granville told him that Hanni had mentioned the incident to him the first evening, but Dick didn't seem interested. The whole matter of his jealousy was strange: he believed so much in independence. But when a feeling entered him that was, so to speak, out of character, he didn't hesitate to say so.~~

"Does the idea haunt you, rather?" Granville asked. He was happy to find that they weren't such different creatures after all."

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But Dick asked, "What idea?"

"Her sleeping with somebody else, if she did?"

Dick was surprised. "No! Why should it?" And he went on talking in a reminiscent tone about how he'd wandered the streets ~~xxx~~ that night. "By God, Pip, that was an awful feeling---the idea of him up there---" He gazed at the floor before him, his eyes gleaming as if he was ^{telling an} ~~remembering an~~ ^{story.} ~~adventure~~ ~~he'd had.~~ There was almost a smile. "Do you know the experience? I think I must have walked twelve blocks that night, more or less counting the railings as they passed, and all the time that little room was in my mind! I kept saying to myself, 'I'll give them ten minutes more', then I was going to pull the fellow out. I probably wouldn't have, though."

"Was he there when you got back?"

"No. He'd gone."

"What did Hanni say?"

But again Dick had little interest. "What did she say?" He paused for a time, passing his hand vaguely over his mouth, still gazing at the floor. "Oh, I ~~don't~~ think she was already a sleep."

It was the jealousy itself that ^{seemed to} interested him ~~most~~. He had an intrigued and baffled expression on his face when he talked about his own trembling, as if it had come from outside, like something actually shaking his legs, a complete surprise and also in some way a gift: it showed what untouched experiences lay in him. He marvel-

led at it. And Hanni's role was secondary. Yet ^{surely} he must love her, to feel the jealousy ^{at all?} Granville looked at his friend in perplexity. The fellow was quite beyond him. unable to get to the bottom of him.

In a moment Dick returned to his old manner: he decided he wanted to "have a look at the girls" at the café in the Commercial Road where they had wicker baskets on the walls---he said he liked the waitresses there. And he leapt out of ^{the} ~~his~~ chair as if it had just bitten

He seemed to be marvelling at the fact that he had feelings at all. They really surprised him - as if they proved his authenticity.

him in the pants. He left behind in Granville a sense that underneath his lonely style there was something grand and warm that would be revealed steadily to him in the next few weeks. Perhaps he would be another real friend like Mohammed. He was excited at the idea. Like ^{all} ~~many~~ men he ^{had} ~~had~~ always looked for a friend but ^{had} ~~found~~ a hand^{ful} of acquaintances ^{instead}. He terribly needed the talk of a man. It gave him confidence and steadied him. Even now he felt he could face his jealousy towards Pinkie better. Who were women, after all? Damn them!

ital Dick and Hanni stayed at the house quite frequently, and were sometimes there for the week-end, Hanni said it was 'heaven' after the Hampton Court flat. However, there were small irritations between the two couples. The chief cause, sometimes the scapegoat for the other three, because he was so helpless, was Dick. When he slept the night in one of the single beds he left it unmade in the morning, and he rarely washed up after a meal; he would cook himself eggs and bacon, and leave his dirty things floating in water. His help in the kitchen was perfunctory, and he did strictly what he was asked to do, no more, even if it meant watching a kettle boil over while he sat at the table, or letting the joint burn. The answer afterwards ^{was} ~~would~~ ^{always} ~~usually~~ be, "Well, old sports, I'm awfully sorry and all that, but you didn't say anything, did you?" One Saturday he went shopping as a special gesture, engineered by Hanni, and returned to the house with almost nothing: he had read 'leg of lamb' in Pinkie's list as 'quarter of ham' for some reason, so that there was no joint for the week-end; and he said he 'couldn't find' the vegetable shop. Also he swung on a chair in the kitchen one evening until it broke. Granville found Dick's blindness to detail a romantic quality, and his own irritation ^{at it} petty and watchful.

Sometimes Pinkie and Dick seemed to be in league together, sitting over crossword-puzzles or a game of chess for hours. And sometimes

Hanni and Pinkie seemed to be conspiring against 'the spear-side', as Dick called himself and Granville. Most of the irritations were unspoken, forgotten quickly in a smile or a friendly cup of coffee in the kitchen. Pinkie and Granville, as a couple, had a standing criticism of the other two as a couple: they 'crept off' to bed too soon, and didn't 'club in' to make an intimate little dinner-party together; their company was always on the point of being withdrawn, it seemed; they were 'nervous'.

There were odd comings and goings all the time. Hanni would call at the house and Pinkie would leave with her soon afterwards; then Dick would call, after they'd gone, and seem surprised not to find them there, and leave immediately as if he knew where to ^{find} ~~look for~~ them. Or Pinkie would call from the office towards the end of the afternoon and ask if Hanni had come over, then omit to leave a message for her in case she did come over, saying it was 'all right', they were sure to 'meet up' somewhere. Or the three of them might return to the house together late in the evening, saying they'd all met 'by chance' in town. He had the impression of a club they knew, or a house similar to this one, only with a more flowing clientèle. (C Excited and horrified him at the same time.

Chapter ⁷ ~~A~~.

Pinkie was given an office of her own at Wembley, as assistant to the ^{P.R.O.} ~~public relations officer~~, 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 ~~and set~~ into a mask, and they ^{never} ~~rarely~~ 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 TIM 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

It's Pinkie between her teeth, "Look at him!" Dick was swinging on his chair---^{at} 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 ~~very clean-shaven~~ ^{purged} pale, ~~round his chin~~ with a youthful 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 touching his fingers gave him endless chances to explore her character and also ^{look down the throat} ~~to-daydream~~---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.

It's "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.

ital "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 dried, 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 ~~showed an intimacy which~~ left him rather a stranger.

l.c.

Dick happened to say, "Oh, by the way," addressing Granville, "I always spit a Pip in old Nevinson's eyes when I can, you know, ~~just to let him 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} ~~did~~ 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} ~~didn't~~."

"Well, I can't imagine you laying it on very thick, in case you're ~~were~~ 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 him 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 cha ^p!"

"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} unforgiving in him when he was stirred sometimes.

Both Dick and Pinkie had to go out to dinner later and Hammi 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 Nevinston 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.

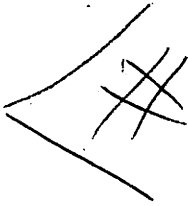
"It'll be lovely moving there," she said quietly.

"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 ~~pump~~ 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 aslepp at once, staying in the same position all night, her right leg crooked over him and her flimsy night-dress 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.



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sections at least as far as the 'sweat-jobs' were concerned, being
the 'Paris of the Middle East'.

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 Pinkie 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 ~~Mansour's~~^{Bassal's} a bit of
a dump, isn't it?"

"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 wanted to explain ^{Barrah} ~~what~~ what the fascination of ~~Mosai~~ ^{Mosai} 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 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 leettle of burned wood !"

"Oh, well," Dick said, making his noiseless laugh, "bedouins can't be choosers, can they?"

There was more pleasantry and Granville stomachached 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 ~~in which he dropped a piece of herring into his white wine~~ ^{and went on drinking it, as usual} ~~and went on drinking it, as usual~~ ^{he said} ~~he said~~---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 little. This wasn't Dick's doing; not wholly. He thought it might have something to do with the company being mixed, two men and two women, so that a compromise-style was achieved, neither the sustained intimacy of women's talk nor the ~~sustained~~ ^{enquiry} ~~inquiring~~ of men's.

ital 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} ~~all~~ of them, ~~even to most of them~~. Dick ~~seemed to~~ impose 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 ~~delicate~~ light curiosity that touched on things ^{departed} ~~and went on~~. She and Dick were similar in this, while Granville and Hanni were ~~similar~~ 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. ^{As to the and Granville had been away from each other} ~~If Granville was away for any length of~~ ^{for some time} ~~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 ^{Barral} ~~Mosul~~. 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 ^{on a} ~~before rowing back in total darkness~~. This ^{also} time ^{it} got dark, ~~too~~. The evening was warm and exciting, with yellow lights on the other side of the river and the sound of grass-hoppers. There were young couples playing ^{croquet} ~~their~~ voices drifting between the trees, ^{laughing} ~~with laughter~~. 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 ^{Barral} ~~Mosul~~? Pinkie was close to him, her shoulders brown from the sun, ^{strong} ~~massive~~ 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} ~~yellow~~ 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-scout," 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 ~~who~~ could say better."

His voice was like a soft chant in the night, as they drifted slowly along, ^{chuckling} accompanied by the chuckles of the women in the darkness ^{now & then} behind as they listened. He had an impression of each of their consciousnesses drifting in the darkness far from each other, ^{so that} making the set forms of the day---their bodies and the glances they gave each other and what they said---appear ^{as} 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} ~~that wasn't~~ silent and indifferent, ^{like the moon-lit bank that passed them} ~~But now~~ ^{And} ~~in the boat,~~ 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

now, without
familiarity for
them — only a
scene like a film,
which would be
called 'beautiful',
detached from them.

Between self and gesture where did the truth lie?

l.c. like, ^{for} We couldn't see into the endless depth of our selves. ^{But} then 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 also in him ^{as well?} ~~as well, but as a mild beginning?~~ 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 accomodate 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 ^{ital} ~~different~~ 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,

And he felt that the others, ^{though} perhaps not Hanni, had a ^{whole and undivided} ~~complete~~ consciousness while he didn't, ^{however distorted their consciousness might be.} His task was to think ^{this} the problems through in order to attain to ^{a similar wholeness:} ~~their completeness:~~ ^{this was his} ~~private interest;~~ he didn't want to be divided. ^{The others weren't} ~~For even if Dick~~ ^{divided in their perceptions as he was.} ~~was divided in himself the division wasn't one of total consciousness?~~

knowing two worlds instead of one?

^{Dick} That is, In hearing and seeing and smelling he didn't doubt that he was simply hearing and seeing and smelling as other men always had done

everywhere and ~~lays~~ ^{would.} ~~shook~~ That was Granville's conclusion, after seeing his gestures and hearing him talk. There was something undoubling in Dick which he himself didn't have; not in the matter of will or desire but in consciousness. ^{Not in ideas - only in consciousness, the dumb consciousness.} For Granville there was always the 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} ^{get back to his} ^{always?} Did he want to work? Granville asked himself as he stood by ^{Dick's} ~~his~~ desk. Was he ashamed of having a visitor outside the strict office-schedule, in case a director walked in? Dick ~~was~~ covered his nervousness with a bland style and genial glances, 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} ^{from himself.} and couldn't take flight. So no real talk was possible.

One Saturday ^{Granville} ~~he~~ woke up slowly and realised ~~that~~ 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} ~~it~~.

position. But she was gone. He was aware that the 'phone-bell had rung, 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 cold all of ^a sudden and was nearly trembling. It was difficult to hear what was said on the ~~phone~~ from the bedroom, but sometimes a word or two came up the well of the stairs. He strained forward to listen, raising his head from the pillows, but the effort had the ~~effect~~ result of making a rushing sound in his ears which blocked out everything else, and he lay back again quickly, his eyes starting out of his head.

stals ~~What was she doing?~~ Was she at the telephone? Then he heard her.

There was a movement on the stairs. Distinctly he heard her say, "But he ^{is only been here} ~~is~~ ~~be gone in~~ a few days, darling! How can I---?" And then the words were lost. His heart was beating fast, like air bounding in his chest. He was really trembling now, so much so that the ends of his fingers were tapping against the sheets in a most absurd way and his teeth were chattering. The alarm hadn't gone off yet; it must be quite early. He couldn't hear any more. A bus passed in the distance, at first a lonely sound to him, then comforting because it suggested the ^{massive} ~~great~~ indifferent ^{machine} activity outside.

l.c. ~~His memory of the afternoon at the Lido when he felt he'd discovered the city, its prevention of suffering, was something of a comfort.~~ ^{Then} He heard her leave the telephone and walk upstairs to the kitchen. There was the

familiar sound of the tea-caddy as she opened it, and the sound of the kettle as she put it heavily on the stove. He became calmer; the feeling of mortal coldness became fixed in him as his trembling grew less. He was aware of an odd, twisted sense of pleasure in himself, at having arrived at ^{an essential} ~~the~~ point of self-destruction, which made any licence ^{of behaviour} /permissible.

He could do what he liked, always in that rigid, half-trembling state! The pain would become fixed and hard inside him, pale. He tried to think of what she'd said again, as the wooden boards upstairs moved, making their familiar bump in the middle. The words now seemed to him different.

He might have been mistaken! This thought came to him in ^{an} insipid, cajoling way; he rejected it, but it wound its way back like ivy. He appealed to his memory again, but that failed him. Perhaps the words had been slightly different. Why should they be referring to him? Why not to someone at the office? But one doesn't say darling in that case! The office wasn't open yet. ^{Anyways, Saturday - no office!} His mind fought hard in the confusion. He would go upstairs and confront her with it. But he couldn't be sure. She might turn round and give him an astonished look, as if to say, 'His mind's not right!' He had to keep his sanity! But he had heard the words! Yet he couldn't repeat them to himself. [And, then, why should he worry? There was this thought at the end of all such reasoning. Suppose she turned round and said, 'I call lots of people darling! Why do you have to be so formal?' Exactly! Why was he hanging on a little word? Why did he want to be a thinking little insect all the time? She was ^{an} ^{sort of} abandoned person. Of course! She said 'darling' to her friends. They even kissed each other sometimes! He'd kissed ^{Hanni} ~~Diana~~, ^{Hanni} ~~Diana~~ had kissed him, Dick had kissed Pinkie---what was the matter with him, exaggerating and storming all the time? People could be affectionate with each other! [But at the same time he knew that the words had been said, and he knew what they meant: as a blank, rigid presence in his mind; like the figure of Death waiting at the end of the corridor. His confusion only took away his power to act on what he knew. He ^{knew he'd be unable} ~~wouldn't be able~~ to say anything to her. ~~What he would~~ ^{He'd} ~~do would be to~~ watch her carefully for any tell-tale sign, and ^{oblique} ~~to ask key~~ questions, or ^{but speak - no!} ~~to show~~ by his grimness that he was aware of what had happened. How terrible it was to be locked in silence all the time! But he couldn't bear to show his heart naked to her. She might ridicule him; or she might flutter her eyelashes and say, 'I don't know what you're talking about, Pip!' She might go and tell Grove! Or ^{Hanni} ~~Diana~~, or Dick! 'He's so frightfully jealous,' she would say, 'I really can't do a thing, even call somebody darling over the phone!' To hell with her! His feelings

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turned full circle. What the devil did he care where she took her body?
It was intimacy he was after. ~~He wanted to see her look at him directly,~~
~~into his eyes. But she always turned it--he was investigating the activi-~~
~~ties of her body, she said! Or seemed to say! For they never actually~~
~~said anything to each other on the subject!~~ She spoke about her freedom.
She needed freedom! Like a spoiled child asking for more sweets---'freedom!'
Not his, of course! He was the spectator! ~~She waited, while he supplied~~
~~freedom. No effort on her side!~~ She was on show, with her precious body!
Of course, it suited her vanity no end! It gave her dramatic qualities,
too! She was so hunted and hemmed-in, don't you know, by a domestic life
she detested! Not for her the kitchen! ^{oh, no!} She wanted freedom, love, affection
ion! And in all this precious ^{bloody} talk she didn't give him one tiny thought.
She was alone! ~~Well,~~ She was alone when she made love to him, ^{yes!} ~~wasn't she?~~
She shut her eyes! Her body was being adored! So he decided to keep
quiet. ~~he mustn't feed the idea that she was obsessed with him!~~ He couldn't
bear the way Dick or Hanni might look at him: as if he had a sickness!
'Poor old PIP!' ~~His pride wouldn't allow that. He'd fight his way out~~
~~in silence.~~ She'd said ^{it} so beseechingly---'darling'! He couldn't believe
it! Her warmth was still in the bed. It was impossible she should get up,
straight from this warmth, and say 'darling' without at least lowering her
voice! He only remembered her tone now. So beseeching! As if there
were aeons of suffering in her. Poor Pinkie! She sounded weighed-down
with sorrow, exhausted. He went upstairs, calmer, washed-out before the
day had started. She was getting tea busily, her face showing nothing.
She hadn't laid a place for him, and he got a cup and saucer disconsolately.
As she poured the hot water into the pot he heard the ^{alarm} ~~alarm~~-bell go down-
stairs. If the atmosphere had been ^{normal} ~~natural~~ between them they would have
referred to that---to being up so early, ^{before the alarm.} But neither of them spoke.
Wasn't that suspicious? he asked himself.

All day the sentence she'd spoken, or might have spoken, came back

to him, sometimes stark and sudden, ~~and~~ sometimes not in the form of words at all but ^{as} a sickening turning sensation in his stomach. That evening after she returned he couldn't bear it any longer. They were sitting at the kitchen table eating a cold dinner she'd mocked up, in silence. They'd hardly said good evening to each other. Again there was no one else in the house. And he suddenly tipped the table up so that the milk fell over and the coffee-pot, after a few seconds of ambiguity, followed it, crashing on to the floor. He sprang up, trembling with rage. She was at once pale, her mouth open, a terrified expression in her eyes. At the same time he slammed his fist down on the table.

"Get out!" he screamed. "Get out of this house!"

She couldn't get her breath properly, fixed in her chair, staring up at him. "For God's sake," she whispered, "what's the matter?"

And now, even as he was trembling, his cheeks flushed, it seemed absurd. She was simply Pinkie again, frightened by his shouting. All his previous thoughts were absurd---an exaggeration. She was so frightened and taken aback by him that it seemed ^{she} ~~the~~ must be innocent. What a fool he was making of himself! Suddenly tipping the table up and standing there like an ape, for no reason! Yet there were reasons: he reminded himself of the first evening, when he'd walked up the stairs with his cases to find a party going on---the kitchen in filth---a smashed mirror next door: that was how much she cared for him! ^{these were reasons, oh, yes!} And his fury came back. Also there was ^{that} ~~the~~ word 'darling': it flashed into him---across his middle---like a flame, hurting frightfully.

"What are you sitting there for?" he shouted. "If you want to go out why the hell don't you?"

"Who said I did?" she asked breathlessly.

"Oh, Christ! You're like a cat on hot bricks!"

His eyes drilled into her, and she looked down and closed her lips, palely, as if ~~she was~~ giving up the effort to speak. So he tried to drive

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his words deeper---to hurt her and thus evoke feeling in her. But he wouldn't mention ^{that 'darling'} the telephone, or say what he most feared. He wouldn't mention Grove. He knew quite well what the limits were: he would only insinuate and attack.

"Why don't you drop all this being a wife, for Christ's sake? What do you want to keep it up for, all this smiling and putting on the right face like a bloody puppet!"

So it went on. The attack was general; all she heard was ^{black} ~~total~~ condemnation ^{of her} ~~of character~~; nothing specific, ^{that she'd done}. He was trying to get a confession out of her, but in such a ^{roundabout} ~~circumspect~~ way that she wouldn't give it to him; ~~only cry~~ because he feared too much what the confession would be. So equally he was trying to establish her innocence. In a way she was doing what he wanted her to do by not speaking.

He stood there flushed, the ends of his fingers moving as they'd done that morning. "You bloody abortionist! You killed that child, didn't you?" He suddenly found himself ^{saying} asking this. [He was completely beyond himself, bent down over her, the veins sticking out of his neck. "You did, didn't you?" [And even in the heat of this moment it occurred to him quite clearly that he was asking this question only because he knew she was innocent and ^{only wanted her to say no!} ~~didn't in any case care~~. It was only a good way of making her feel a sting from him---perhaps plead with him to stop---if only she'd plead! [But she sat there pale and gripped in a panic-stricken silence. He began calling her a slut, a dirty whore, a ^{mean,} crawling vegetable, until in the contrariness of human nature he almost burst out laughing at the way ^{his} ~~the~~ words came tumbling out. But she couldn't see this. She could only see the grim face. Then underneath his fury-cum-laughter he began to feel a panic much like calm, tremblingly taut---as he suspected that she agreed with him, and condemned herself, and could do nothing about it. She was in love! He felt like crying out, with tears in his eyes, 'Oh,

In love!

Ital

Pinkie, you're in love! / Please don't, please don't---!'^{pleaded}, much like those wounded men in battle who ~~cried out~~ with the shells. She was in love! But his mind at once dismissed it, in a blind stroke. In love!

She began crying, ~~and~~^{and} as always when this happened his anger disappeared, as if ^{it broke} the rules of the game ~~had been violated~~.

n.p.

"Stop crying," he murmured. [Once he'd said in Basrah, "I wish you never cried when I shouted at you! I want you to be strong and stand up to me. Why don't you contradict what I say? Why don't you shout back?"

n.p.

[But she always gave in---lowered her head and cried like a child. The usual intolerable pity filled ^{him} like dust in his throat. She reminded him of a bear they'd seen together in Kurdistan, chained to a pale behind a landowner's house. A Kurdish solicitor called Khalid Beg with whom he'd become quite friendly, a tall, straight-backed man with blazing, fair eyes, ^{had taken along} took them. When the servants approached ^{the bear} it with long poles it began to

e.c.

whimper in a most pitiful way, ~~as if~~ knowing what was coming; The poles ~~were to torture him~~ ^{away} they were twisted in the skin of his neck; one could see ^{how} ^{of his neck} where the fur ^{all worn away. The cruel little bastards!} was gone. Everybody was most amused except him and Pinkie. Every day this torture was enacted for visitors, ~~they said~~ Pinkie's little, "No, don't do it any more!" made them all laugh. Now she was like the bear. He remembered how the creature had lowered his head in a submissive way, bowing to the awful god of pain. He felt abashed and horrified at himself, as if he'd been one of those grinning little servants. He was tired and hollow. He looked out of the tiny window at the roofs and the dim sky. It wasn't quite dark yet.

Ital

"Shall we go for a walk?" he asked quietly.

n.p.

She sniffed and looked up slowly. "Yes, fine!" she said, already bright. [They walked in the streets by the river, between the closed, silent offices. There was hardly a soul about. He put his arm in hers and they strolled along in a leisurely way, quite tired. They passed the Port of London building with its huge pillars, like a massive, arrogant

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dedicated to ^{folly,}
 temple and ^{then} the Tower, lying in a dip, a ^{truthful,} shadowy hump in the dusk.
 The river gleamed under the lights, rolling slightly. The air was quite warm, with the touch of ^a breeze, and there ^{were} ~~had been~~ clouds; there might be a storm. Even by the river there were few people, and the buses were mostly empty, in the lull before the theatres finished. [They passed a group of tall Victorian houses with arched windows, now divided into apartments. One of the windows was open at the bottom and they could see a dimly-lit room with gaudy, scarlet wall-paper, ~~rather~~ like a huge tapestry slung round all the walls; and three or four people were sitting there, drinking something, raising cups to their lips ~~every now and then~~ and talking. It looked so calm. They hardly seemed to move at all. The room had a high ceiling with a chandelier hanging down and a large gilt-framed mirror on the wall. It might be a club ^{room} of some kind. It was too gaudy, perhaps, for a private room. It was like having a glimpse into the nineteenth century; there was such a sense of interior and warmth, that made the present epochs seem naked. 'How wonderful ~~it would be to~~ ^{like that} sit in ~~such~~ a room/with a friend!' he thought. He imagined the silence that would fall between their sentences, and the way they would gaze up at the ceiling, leaning back, in reflection. Life would be ordered. There would be the quiet assurance of being understood by someone, and of looking at the world from a distance. The buses would go by outside, a friendly voice from the world. There wouldn't be scenes like the one he and Pinkie had just had. Women would be more separate from men, ~~each~~ in their ^{own} world, with the friends they loved and the particular tone of conversation that belongs to each sex. There wouldn't be all this confusion and mixture of opposites. He would make coffee for his friend, on a little gas-fire of his own perhaps; he would pick down a book from one of his shelves. At the end of the evening he would see Pinkie, and she would have been in her world, too, and come out with her femininity ⁱⁿ freshened and glowing. If only she yearned for a woman's friendship as

it's ~~much~~ ^{men's} as he did for a ~~man's~~! But ^{it was always} ~~usually~~ she said, "I don't think I like women, really." In Basrah she told him, "I prefer the company of men. They're so much freer than women, and they're not jealous. Women can be so bitchy!" ^{had} [He] wanted her to see more of women in Basrah. ^{told her} He ~~said~~ it was a wonderful opportunity to see inside the harems. She could ^{then} tell him about it! Mohammed had a whole family of sisters whom he would never meet. Why didn't she go and see them? She went once and ^{then} refused to go again. She said they were so frightfully dull. Three of them, believe it or not, hadn't seen the front gate of the house from the outside! The two older ones were allowed to take a turn round the city with their mother in a closed car with the ^{blinds} ~~curtains~~ ^{once a day,} down, seeing ~~but~~ ^{on the other hand,} unseen. ~~Yet they told her they were very happy.~~ She said they were by far the happiest creatures she'd met in her life. When she ^{then} asked, what they did ^{all day} they ^{told her} ~~said~~ they rode ^{their} the bicycle round the garden ~~and~~ and fell off, talked about their brothers, listened to the wireless and played games! But she wouldn't go back. She said she needed ^{the} ~~men's~~ ^{of men} company for its bigness and lack of trifles. A freindship with a woman, she said, was a mariage de convenance between two vanities. (This, he thought, was what she seemed to have contracted with Hanni.)

"That looks cosy," he said, pointing to the room.

"Cosy?" she asked ~~with~~ a quick, affectionate glance at him. "It looks hideous, darling!"

"Why?"

"Well, the furnt~~ure~~, ~~for one thing~~. And That mirror!"

"What do you mean?"

"It takes up half the wall! I ~~think~~ our place is much nicer."

"Yes, so do I, really." But I thought with the river and all those lights---

"Yes, the river's lovely. I wish we were nearer the river. We ought to look for a house down here."

had a kind of natural, born, dramatic loneliness;

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There was something very quiet ⁱⁿ about her. It was a quiet of the soul. He glanced at her, surprised. She was so intact, as he'd never known her before! Usually her face ^{as he had kind of seen} suggested loneliness, she had a slightly drooping mouth and a downward gaze. But ^{this} ~~that~~ was gone. She'd been silent under his attack as usual, but this time he felt his words hadn't got to her heart, to hurt her as much as even she would have liked! She had her own life ^{now,} separate from him. ^{Was that it?} He was aware of her as a separate person at his side, with a new dignity. She seemed taller even, and was gazing before her in a level way. There was an undauntedness in this gaze which he hadn't seen before. He felt he'd been shouting at a third person---not her at all. And ^{only} the third person had wept.

She hadn't really kissed him since his return. She pecked him on the lips, that was all. Even the second or third night, when they'd had an orgasm, she kept ~~her~~ lips closed. It occurred to him that someone might have asked her to do this---never to give him her tongue again! He imagined the words, 'At least, if you have to sleep with him, don't let him do that!' How suddenly these unpleasant, stunning thoughts came!

And equally someone might have said to her, 'Do you mean to say you'd have his child, and give it suck?' He put his arm closer in hers, wearily, and she hugged him to her for a moment. They walked home in silence, like children. The next morning when he got up he went straight to the mirror and looked at himself. 'Am I disgusting?' he thought. He gazed at his rather heavy, bleached eyebrows and the tiny white lines round his eyes caused by squinting in strong sunlight. His face had lost, ~~as he'd noted before~~ by a mere breath of a change---its weathered look. He looked ^{closer} ~~deeper~~, but could tell nothing. But all at once he found himself vindictive-looking, his eyes buried deep in his head, his brow heavy with too much frowning, his chin pushed forward in perpetual rejection. Was it true? He couldn't tell what he was really like! He turned away from the mirror and went slowly upstairs to the kitchen, feeling he had no

There were those sweet kisses, or the night he'd heard about her promotion to the Beirut office, but even then she'd kept her mouth more or less closed, he remembered - he hadn't felt her tongue!

substance, his footsteps echoing through the house. His pride was dashed. He couldn't forget how intact~~she~~ looked! He slouched about the house all day, hardly able to lift his eyes, in shame at being himself. His body didn't fit and he hated it. He couldn't settle to anything and couldn't face going out. In the mornings^{now} he woke with a heavy, damp, still sense of unworthiness. He couldn't tell what the root of it was! It had been going on, he thought, to a greater or lesser extent for years, and now it was an overwhelming suffocating presense on top of him in the morning! ~~It suggested a total inadequacy of his being.~~ There was a flat rejection of his whole personality. It was ~~like~~ an unpleasant physiaal sensation---at times ~~it was~~ completely identified with his body: a pain, a sort of fever, a nasty taste in his mouth. Sometimes he woke up in the ~~morning~~^{middle} of the night with such a complete sense of condemnation---a terrible dankness, like a cave---that he thought he hadn't the life-~~energy~~^{living} to go on/another minute; and then the feeling cleared, and he couldn't understand where it came from! It rose out of his sleep like a steam.

He was at a full-stop in his being: what was this total helplessness he had even with his wife? and with Dick and Hanni? Why couldn't he be easy with them as he observed they were with each other? ^{Or were they?} What was the world they had which he couldn't share? Did that world exist? If not, why did his imagination require it to be created? Was it to do with his own divided consciousness? Was it that he found himself in a world where he didn't belong, so that he needed future training? Could they understand each/other while he was condemned to stand in bewildered detachment, one foot among them and one foot in the other world of his childhood? Was he responsible for his own state? What had he done that was so wrong? He tried to wrack his brains: 'What have I done wrong?' Why, he wanted to cry in despair, had he left that first world he knew?

NIGHT OF THE ECLIPSE

BOOK V

CHAPS 25-27

(The End)

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CHAPTER 26

The weeks passed. There were newcomers in the group as a result of the Tail-and-Hoof ball. He was out nearly every evening and couldn't understand how he'd managed to spend so much time in the house before; the phone rang continually for one or other of them; Dick and Hanni now took him for granted as a fellow party-goer; usually he slept until noon and waited for the day to develop, which it did of its own accord, largely ^{through} by the agency of the telephone. [He went for long walks with Hell, who was one of the newcomers; they strolled by the river, hardly talking; a subject of conversation would seem to present itself but then fade away before it was clear; they were impenetrable to each other. The hair-girl also came to the house, sometimes with Hanni, sometimes alone, preoccupied and rarely talkative; but she would suddenly wake up and begin joking and making her deafening laugh; she would come and sit in the music-room while he was there, hardly glancing at him, and making ^{dates} appointments with ^{her} ~~each other~~ was out of the question; there was no need, since she came nearly every day; they would put on a record and dance, then he would make coffee, nothing else. [Alice the snake-girl also came, and Joyce the pale girl was sometimes there. He began to share Dick's fascination for the pale girl; she would sit in the kitchen for an hour or more looking at a magazine, quite still and soft, or smoking and gazing in front of her; there was a quiet detachment between her and Pinkie; they had something in common, in their presences, and they averted their eyes from each other as

if afraid of mingling their identities. Hell wore her hair in the same way as at the ball, straight down, and usually she had a black dress on and clutched a small black hand-bag; she always looked cold, and her teeth seemed to chatter invisibly when she talked, while her shoulders were ^{hunched} hunched slightly; Pinkie said that Grove called her ~~WALLFLOWER TREMBLES~~ 'the last trump'.

Life was now so casual for him that he felt his identity had gone, ^{he pleasantly} There was never any cause for nerves or apprehension since he wasn't called on to do anything; no conversation was expected of him and no powers were attributed to him ^{in this circle} no one was greatly interested in anyone else. It made no difference ^{that} ~~that~~ he had no money in his pocket; someone always called and an activity would start for which his company was required; he had to make no effort for this; he could sit in silence; his face was known and expected, as the other faces were expected by him. The social classes mixed, or rather the shadows left on life by ^{the past} ~~the~~ mixed---the snake-girl's Cockney accent and Hell's breathless, ~~the snake-girl's~~ creme-de-la-creme speech, ^{as Pinkie walked in} But everyone had their being in suspense; the snake-girl was wary of Hell, and the latter was delicately and flinchingly aware of her, so that their real presences were held back. At first Granville thought that only he held his real self ^f back but he saw that everyone did it; Dick was perhaps the most ~~of~~ open of them, he gave the truest demonstration of himself in his behaviour; but here there was an heroic element, of a special cleverly and painfully devised ^{performance} as a result he amused and enchanted people most, because he'd gone into the matter more deliberately than anybody else, and had come to the conclusion that if ^{you were going} ~~one~~ ^{one} to turn a false face to the world it might as well be an entertaining ^{unpleasant} ~~frightful~~ His suffering, as Granville learned, was proportionately more ~~frightful~~ when he got back to his room; he would sit and tremble, Hanni said, castigating himself; one evening he came back to her at Hampton Court and said he was sure Granville looked on him as a 'sex-maniac' with nothing in his head at all; at such times, also, he was afraid of going mad; everything would be unhinged for him; he would be floating, severed from everything,

falling in empty space; she said he sometimes even appeared not to recognise her properly; there would be no consolation anywhere for him, even in her; he would recognise none of his pleasures; he couldn't lose himself in anything that was the most frightful thing; he ^{always} jerked awake, ~~at once again~~ it was this that sent him to ^{girl;} ~~the women;~~ by the time he'd overcome this fearful floating detachment, sufficiently to excite their interest in him---he told Hanni that luckily the 'little worm, vanity' had so far never let him down---~~he~~ he was already back in life, and strong enough to go back to Hanni and make love to her; this, she said, was mainly why she didn't try to interfere with him; it was his way of getting strength, from which she benefited.

Just as other people drifted into his house, without saying a word, so he drifted into the local cafe or the pub where he might expect to find a group of them; and he would sit down in the same way, nodding hullo and then giving himself up to the silence. Whether or not the others regarded this common behaviour as strange he couldn't find out, as they couldn't find out if he regarded it as strange; it was simply the accepted style. Hell sometimes rang up in the middle of the night and asked for a bed; she lived with 'a family of school-teachers', as she called them---even the little children were school-teachers, she said, ~~as a paying guest, on the outskirts of Islington,~~ and she dared not return when she'd taken 'more than a fair drop'; so she would creep into the house and be found on the divan in the music-room next morning, her black lace underwear in a pile on the floor and her hair hanging down from the pillow like ~~two pieces of~~ black crêpe. He or Pinkie would leave the key under the mat ^{for her.} But Granville still clung to his privacy; after a time he refused to let her in. Also he would lock the door downstairs during the day sometimes, and not answer the door-bell or telephone. ~~Still~~ It seemed to him, ^{then} with all these callers, and the activities in the evening, that he had nothing to do; he couldn't wear his energies out; he wrote letters of application ^{for jobs} and then didn't post them; he was on the point of ringing T.I.M. a dozen times; he got in ~~some~~ travel-books from the library and began to

work out itineraries across the desert based on other people's journeys; he wrote a long letter to Mohammed telling him what he'd done and promptly tore it up; then he wrote a frantic one, saying, 'Please, help me!', and posted it. He set himself tasks in the morning and arranged his desk neatly; he went through a carbon copy of his report for T.I.M. with the idea of amplifying^{it}---to hand^{the new sections} it in to them later, perhaps, as the basis of his next job with them. There was still no answer from Nevinson. Did they regard him as an ex-employee or not? Dick told him not to apply for his superannuation as he would get more later, for some complicated reason; he obeyed without question and drew his last money out of the bank. He couldn't say he was unhappy, ^{though} ~~however~~. Hell borrowed the school-teachers' car one evening---she simply took it out of the garage---and ran^{it} against the railings by the Tower of London. There was always some interesting little event. Deryk Grysham had a special nod for her at a party they all went to. The past seemed quite dead; he was an accepted face, nowhere was barred to him; he talked to Grysham casually, and the idea of there having been a to-do between Dick and ^{the Grysham} ~~Grysham~~ over ~~him~~ ^{himself}, as mentally he recalled there had been, was outlandish and absurd, and belonged to a moral conflict---a social conflict---was it a conflict of ideas? which he couldn't grasp now!

Hell gave promise of real friendship; it would be a delicate, quiet relation in which they would sit much as he and Mohammed had sat by the river in the evening, with long pauses, saying whatever came into their heads; she would smoke reflectively, saying didn't he think this person had something 'valiant' about him or that person was 'a York rather than a Lancaster', always in a style that just evaded sound sense. He realised after a time that she was hardly aware of him. She only went on in her reflective dream, drawing others in sometimes, if the conditions were quiet enough. Yet she was polite and answered questions; sometimes she showed the most extraordinary courtesy and charm ^{when} ~~in~~ accepting ~~the smallest~~ ^{the smallest} thing^s, like a cup of tea; but then she would be ^{absent} ~~absent~~ and fidgety again; at a party, after a few drinks,

she would pass by him without the slightest recognition, her eyes blind and a smile drifting on her lips. Dick said that she and her whole group of 'limp noble weeds' gave him the heeby-jeebies, and he cursed the day Granville had gone to that Tail-and-Hoof ball! Sometimes, he said, Hell would fling her 'long, reedy arms' round him and scream, "Dick! Haven't seen you in an age!", and sometimes she would walk right past him 'jittering and ~~///~~ muttering to herself'; once he caught hold of her as she was going past and said in a sharp voice, right into her face, giving her whole body a little 'rattle', ~~hxxxxhakingxhxx~~ "Tell me my name!", and she had to gaze at him for some time, straining her eyes, before she could say in a faltering voice, "Is it---is it Dick Pollocke, by any chance?"

It occurred to Granville that Hell set the tone for all the other girls who came to the house---to judge from their behaviour. They seemed to think that ^{this} was how you lived at Chaworth Road; the pale girl and the snake-girl talked quietly like Hell, yawned ^{like her}, lolled, smiled in ^{the same} ~~///~~ limp way. Even the hair-girl showed no vivacity when Hell was there, not unless there was a party or Larry Vice was mentioned---at the word 'Vice' her tiny pale figure would make a jump and her eyes would move in their deep sockets, waking up, and she would scream, "Oh, Vice! That boy's wound himself round me like poison ivy!" Once she said in a quiet ~~xxx~~ voice to Granville, "I'll tell you something, kid, Larry and my dad got on fine, and what more do you want than that, eh?" He nodded like an idiot and put another record on.

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swering. He recognised no one at all and everybody wondered how Hell had been able to establish herself in his memory; he called everyone 'job', or rather every male, for he had no name for women; he would say to Granville, "I say, job, have you got another drink there?", and when Granville replied, "Yes, what will you have, wine or beer?" he would flash on his smile and say ^{absolutely} nothing, only wait ^{at his side}. Or he would ask, "Can Hell ^{and I} stay the night, job?", then ^{promptly leave the house} ~~not return for a week or so~~. One day Dick took Granville aside in the bedroom while Hell and Cerberus were sitting next door, and murmured to him, "Well, how do you like the middle classes ^{now? do you?} / Quite sane, aren't we?" Hell told them all that Cerberus was in the habit of 'walking off' with things, and that a few days ^{previously} ~~before~~ he'd left someone's house with a persian carpet over his shoulders; he'd left it in the Tube---"I think I left it in the Tube," he said afterwards. ^{These} ~~Such~~ stories ^{sounded} ~~were in an~~ exaggerated, ^{always} ~~well~~, but they turned out to be true; for instance, Hell was called to a police-station in Islington to answer questions about the persian carpet.

Glenning brought over a young man with ruby lips and a pleasant, drowsy smile called 'Mac' Saunders who edited the ^{daily} gossip-column that Granville had read so often in the last three months. He and Granville began going for long walks together, sometimes with Hell as well, again hardly ever exchanging ³ a word. The more he came to know 'Mac', or rather the more silences he shared with him, the more ~~more~~ surprised he was that what Glenning ~~always~~ called 'the racket' ~~of public life~~ ^{hand't} touched him, and that he gave an impression of untouched goodness and calm; ^{'Mac'} ~~he~~ had his own drowsy reflections, he was ^{the} most amiable and cooperative person to be with, he fell in with every suggestion, he ^{seemed} ~~appeared~~ to have no sense of status---Granville was more and more taken aback. The thing that had broken Glenning in the same work, namely, that it was hollow, ~~and had~~ ^{with} no 'inside' to it, was the main advantage for 'Mac'. It meant he could earn good money without touching the peculiar calm that lay in him; he could go on with his thoughts and pleasures really as if there was no work in life at all; he had learned the deft touch, after a long apprent-

iceship, he said. Sometimes he came into the kitchen when Granville was there and worked on the conversations he intended to have at parties that evening; it was easy enough to get people to agree with them after you'd written them, he said, because most of them were like 'babes in arms' when it came to a bit of publicity. Now and then he showed Granville these little notes, and Granville would see them in print next day: He could thus see how the 'glittering world' with which he had ^{once} excited his ^{own} imagination, ~~against his better judgement~~, ^{had} came about in the mind of a young man not unlike himself, only with fewer illusions about how the world ran. He was also surprised to realise that 'Mac' Saunders looked on him as a source of information, because so many people came to the house; a conversation with Hell might, for instance, be useful one day if ~~somebody~~ ^{a member of} her family flung a big party or got married or assaulted someone. ~~He~~ ^{Granville} also knew the Kaaba dancing company, the Marquis and some of the permanent guests at the Gare St. Lazare---the 'darker side of life', which also could be material for ^{'Mac'} ~~himself~~ for instance, the gossip column once described a house where 'aristocracy met dancing-girl', which could have been Chaworth Road. ^{'Mac'} He liked the 'mice' there, too, namely, Joy Celeste, the snake-girl, Joyce and a number of others. But he seemed to have no sexual affiliations himself; he followed other people's affairs with a rapt, benevolent curiosity.

Parties came about at the house without Pinkie even knowing about them; she was now used to returning home and finding one in progress; and with astonishing ease she ~~made~~ ceased to look on him as a recluse; he was now much like anyone else; but at the same time she showed traces of disappointment, as if a god of hers, however hateful, had fallen. He had spent every penny of his money and stayed in the house nearly all the time, attaching himself to a group whenever one offered itself. Meanwhile ~~Pinkie~~ ^{she} was getting plump and had taken to a wider skirt. He began to be sick in the mornings, and Glenn-ing explained that this was only the 'couvade', ~~an~~ ^a ancient primitive ritual by which the men went through all the labour-^{apins} for the women, ~~and~~ ^{a while} the

women, he added with a look at Pinkie, went about their 'ordinary business'. The plumpness didn't stop her dancing; everyone agreed that exercise was good for child-birth. There were complaints from the neighbours about some of the parties; the windows were usually kept open because of the heat and smoke. One morning they found that a passer-by had pissed into their empty milk-bottles in the night and then into the letter-box; the letters had soaked it up and were yellow and limp; one of them was from Elizabeth giving the date of the river-party, and Pinkie had to phone to ask what she'd written; Granville said with a laugh that she ought to tell Liz that her letter had arrived soaked in piss, but a demure ^{and haughty} look came over Pinkie's face and she said, "I wouldn't dream of it!" The hall downstairs began to be cluttered up with articles left by guests---raincoats, suitcases and even a small pram. No one knew where the pram came from. He decided to forget about past and ~~the~~ future---even the little reminders that there still were. People could say what they liked about him; he wouldn't stop to think; he'd achieved his objective, to be free in his own country!

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women, he added with a look at Pinkie, went about their 'ordinary business'. The plumpness didn't stop her dancing; everyone agreed that exercise was good for child-birth. There were complaints from the neighbours about some of the parties; the windows were usually kept open because of the heat and smoke. One morning they found that a passer-by had paid them the compliment ⁱⁿ during the night of pissing into their empty milk bottles and then into the letter-box; the letters ^{dropped} which had been ~~put~~ in ~~them~~ had soaked it up and were yellow and limp; one of them was from Elizabeth giving the date of the river-party ^{that} ~~that~~ was coming off, and Pinkie had to ^{phone} to ask what she'd written; Granville said she ought to ^{tell her saying that the letter had arrived literally soaked in piss,} say what had happened, but a demure and haughty expression came over Pinkie's face and she said, "I wouldn't dream of it!" The hall downstairs began to be cluttered up with articles left by guests---raincoats, suit-cases and even a small pram. ^{No one knew where the pram had come from for} He decided to forget about past and future---even the little reminders ^{that} there still were. People could say what they liked about him; ~~he wouldn't stop to think; he'd achieved his objective, to be free in his own country.~~

→ A heavily-built man not unlike Glenning started coming to the house; he seemed to connect Granville with Pinkie in the matter of rank; one day he asked ^{Granville} ~~him~~ in a soft voice, "Didn't I meet your father down at Freddy's place? I think his name was Granville!" But Granville only laughed, ^{in reply,} and the other man, who was called Algy, talked about something else at once. He slurred his sentences, unlike Glenning; and there was a vagueness in his eyes ^{that} which Glenning didn't have---the same blind quality ^{as} ~~that there was~~ in Hell. It was said that Algy had once lifted a ^{clean} ~~much~~ smaller man off his feet in a ^{when he was drunk} pub and said to him, "Don't I know your cousin David?" And the smaller man ^{had} said in an icy voice, "Let me ^d ~~down~~ at once, you smell of garlic"; to which Algy had ^{said,} ~~replied,~~ "All right, there's no need to be offensive about it." There were endless ^{little} stories like this, ^{one} mostly told by Hell, who made an odd, fluttering and breathless laugh afterwards. Another ^{story} was that 'Mac' Saunders ^{bought} had a set of whips to flagellate his girl-friends with, but the sight of them

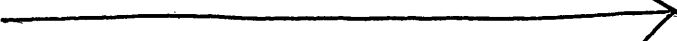
^{had} terrified him and ^{instead} he used them to pull the blinds down with at night.

Granville never felt watched in their company; that, he told himself, was a wonderful relief for his nerves; there was none of the 'third ghost' he remembered in Walsh; they weren't thinking about you silently behind their eyes, and judging your conduct; they didn't judge you at all; you were simply a fact for them; they were outspoken and rash; he could really let himself go if he wanted to; on the other hand he never did; he was more constrained than ever before in his life. [These people, he told himself, threw their voices ^{and} weren't afraid of anyone; they didn't have closed or haunted faces; they might be peculiar, like Hell or Cerberus, but that ^{didn't matter;} was different; it occurred to him ~~again, what he'd thought in the Sussex days after reading Taine,~~ that an aristocracy ~~did the service of~~ ^{ed} living to the hilt for its country; it defined permissible behaviour once and for all; and the middle-classes, following behind them, threw their caps in the air only as high as they had done; ~~for the aristocratic standard was the only real standard known to the middle-classes; the only standard they themselves had brought into the world was a false one, namely, expediency; whether ^{it} worked or not, and what good it did.~~ But the aristocracy provided the mysterious ^{glitter} at the edge. Thus, he said to himself, he was passing through a worth-while experience; he couldn't say who was 'aristocratic' in the people who came to the house--- Hell was said to be; but, more than this, what was 'aristocratic' at a time when aristocracy didn't ^{even} exist, ~~and~~ when it hadn't existed for a hundred years or more ^{he didn't know!} He meant the shadow of aristocracy; ^{then;} these people were in the shadow; and he was learning from it; that was a task, surely, he'd set himself at Meedham? But he couldn't remember what had passed through his head at Meedham. It seemed so long ago, and in a period when he had shone with health.

~~His real self was in total abeyance now, whereas with Dick and Annie it had been only partly so; he began to look back on his relation with them as on a period of thought and clarity. Many of the people who came to the~~

He began to think of the days before their Meedham visit as ones of thought and clarity. His friendship with Dick and Hanni belonged to that period. Yes, there'd been a friendship! An extraordinary innocence seemed to surround it now! But the period was over. The friendship was past. They came to the house less and less, because of the 'weeds'.

Many of the people who came to



To P. 954.



the house now didn't know his name; one of them, hearing Verberus call him 'job', seriously thought his name was that, and even introduced him to someone as, "This is Job---I'm sorry, I don't know your second name."

Another thing he liked about Hell and Algy and the others was that their manners were automatic; they were silent whenever the mood took them; they didn't hold a moral plan of conduct before them, and they didn't try to work out easy routes for themselves in life; they burned themselves at the flame; they didn't search other people's remarks for meaning, or judge people's feelings by the look on their faces; partly this was due to the fact that they rarely listened to other people. ~~Sterner~~ Sternness didn't frighten them; they didn't smile to put other people at their ease; they didn't feel threatened by outbursts of feeling in other people; they didn't stand in moral scrutiny of other people; other people were still in mystery for them. But here, in this last assertion, he doubted; what mystery did he feel himself to have in their presence? He was just a name, and often not even that; he was respected, but without him doing anything to win it; he was respected ~~simply~~ because he was one of them! Something ~~was~~ was missed out---his personality; it was where he was separate from everyone else. So he was more middle class than he thought! He asking for ~~his~~ personality! For a moment he was aware of the night of the eclipse again; the spark in every man that Christ had shown---the place where he was secret to himself... But then it was gone!

Not that Hell and Algy were at all certain of themselves; Hell was called 'the nerve-bag' or 'rattle-box'. Algy was morbidly convinced that people were 'getting at him' behind his back. Yet, confronted by people, they had an automatic manner; there was already something in their voice and delivery which they hadn't built for themselves. That was another important

thing for him. But this also meant that they didn't develop; since so much was already planted in them, ^{by upbringing} there was no moral development; their lives didn't seem to move to or ^r from anything; they simply were; but all round them there was movement. What was happening to him? That was his question all the time even though he had nothing to answer it with. There was this moral concern in him, as there was in Dick. But for the others, ^{for Hell, Algy, Cerberus and the others,} life was in depth; it was still; and that was restful to him; but at the same time there was movement in him, and he couldn't deny it; he couldn't deny its thumping demands under the stillness. He couldn't talk to them as himself so he made jokes, danced, sat in silence, drank and asked questions. He tried to make his world devoid of future, in depth like theirs; but it wasn't natural to him; ~~he might say he'd become distorted, in that it wasn't natural to him, but it wasn't and that was that;~~ ^{because} the future ^{stretched} ~~stretched~~ before him in the form of a quest. Suddenly, as if to deny these very thoughts, Algy threw up his job in London and flew to New Zealand where he started work as a wine-waiter in one of the big hotels; Glenning predicted that within a year Algy would be unrecognisable---'weather-beaten and brisk', impossible to tell apart from a working man, and without a trace of Hell or Cerberus on his person!

At one of ^{his} ~~the~~ parties Joy Celeste held an impromptu strip-tease competition ^{an upstairs} ~~upstairs~~ in ^{one of the} ~~one of the~~ rooms; all the rooms had people in them, and the piano was being played downstairs, but more and more of the guests were drifting upstairs; he walked up as well and could hardly get in the door; there was a hush in the room, ^{and the first thing he saw was a glimmering yellow light reflected in the mirror;} ~~though every inch of it was occupied;~~ the lights were out and it appeared that by the mantelpiece, in the light of two candles, the hair-girl and a young man were making bets of some kind; losing a bet meant you had to take off an article of clothing; she was already in her blouse and knickers, minus skirt and stockings; ^{the young man} ~~he~~ was without shirt or vest; her hair flowed down over her shoulders, and it appeared that she had claimed untying her hair as a valid forfeit; Larry Vice ^{the young man} was one of the guests, and his hoo, hoo could be heard in the hush; the only talk was between her and

the young man; they were saying in quiet voices, "No, I claim one here," and "Start with your pants, then", "Not on your life!", "All right, I claim a couple on that and advance you one on the last forfeit, how's that?" The deep hush surrounded them. There was an atmosphere of intense concentration. "No, sirree!" she suddenly shouted, yelling with laughter. All the men were gazing at her intently, as if she were operating a subtle mechanism of some kind and they were admiring her ingenuity; he didn't know half the faces; her blouse came off, and she stood there in brassiere and knickers, saying, "Hey, now, look, I'm chilly, customer," while the young man persisted, "That's not a full forfeit." Then it came to an end without further undressing; she was suddenly ashamed, glancing round at all the rapt faces in the flickering candle-light, and with a shake of her head and a defiant pout she pulled on her skirt and blouse again.

Granville had got into the habit ^{of} ~~of~~ when ^{he was alone} ~~he was with~~ Dick of referring to ^{the hair-girl} ~~her~~ as 'Makboula', her supposed real name, and by accident he did it one evening when they were all together in the music-room; she turned on him at once, her head lowered, and hissed, "Drop that name, streaky pants!"; there was the utmost blind venom in her eyes and he stepped back, astonished; but ^{suddenly} ~~as~~ quickly she was talking ^{again} in an unconcerned way to someone else. They hardly spoke to each other again after that, but she continued to come to the house, and he ^{made} ~~served~~ her ^{coffee} ~~whatever was in the house~~ as before; she didn't seem to notice any difference. He reflected ^{on} the expression 'streaky pants', wondering what it ~~was~~ meant; his trousers weren't streaked; Dick said he thought it was a cross between 'streak of piss' and 'randy pants', a 'grammatical cross or compound, old sport.'

Suddenly as he lay in bed one night there was a terrific onslaught on his mind from the silence outside, in accusations that came like hammers one after the other. He was stunned and began to sweat, his mouth open. He didn't believe in God; ^{l.c.} ~~He~~ only believed in Christ as an historical figure. He didn't believe in the miracles. He didn't believe Christ was the son of

God! He didn't believe Christ rose on the third day, ^{despite the heavy} ~~guard outside the tomb.~~ He didn't believe in the ascent to heaven! He didn't believe in heaven! His heart beat fast and the blood plunged through him like a torrent in the darkness. He didn't believe he would be received after death! He believed in oblivion! There was no help. There was no foothold and nothing came from any activity. While he sweated and stared before him there was also a ^{total} ~~total~~ pause in him. The night of the eclipse was dead. He was an impostor. He struggled to recollect his reasoning that night. He almost pushed himself out of bed in the darkness, straining; where were the thoughts? where should he begin again? where was the first foothold so that he could climb again? But all ~~that~~ he could think of---they came ringing like a false bell into his mind, idiotically---were bare propositions, 'the spark in every man', 'riding in on an ass', 'giving up ambitions', but the state behind them was gone; they were words. He lay back again bathed in sweat, exhausted. 'What has happened to me?' he asked again. To P. 157(a)

~~There was a small, pretty young woman in Hell, a group and they became the~~
~~lovers almost at once after making each other there was a sudden, gnawing~~
~~will between them, and they understood this mutual will, like a third being~~
~~set up between them, pulling their bodies together, the moment they needed~~
~~good evening; (it was) like a flame, white-hot, not really passionate but with~~
~~a white determination, and they danced with each other silently. But the~~
~~gnawing desire was exhausted, almost at once. It was the same as he'd felt~~
~~with Hell and Algy. He was absent to her in his individuality. He was~~
~~an abstract force for her. They sucked the sex out of each other and were~~
~~then dry, without conversation or even friendliness. He asked Dick for the~~
~~key of his Hampton Court flat, and they spent some hours there every day.~~
~~He was one of 'the men' for her, wild underneath, rash, in command, belonging~~
~~to another world, not comprehensible to her; he was only flesh; she had spurts~~
~~of anger, irritation which leapt up and clawed at him. Then the sex would~~
~~return and the same hollow act would begin; it meant nothing to him, but his~~

There was a small, pretty young woman in Hell's group who became his 'lover'. There was a sudden, gnawing desire between them, pulling their bodies together, like a hard will nobody else could stop. It was like a flame, white-hot, not really passionate but with a ~~hard~~ white and hard determination---they met in a club, in a large group, and danced together at once. They mingled their breath together as they moved round the floor, gazing at each other closely, without a word, their faces almost touching. They kissed suddenly, under the eyes of her 'husband'---the man living with her at the moment. It was beyond both of them, this hard, obstinate lust. He quickly took her phone-number and they met three days later, in the afternoon, at the Hampton Court flat. It was a cold, dismal day. The moment the door closed behind them he began kissing her and taking off her clothes. She had the curse but, half-naked, she pulled him into the nearest room, to one of the divans, and he came on her stomach. That was before they'd spoken a word together. They met there again the following week, and stripped naked in front of the gas-fire. But the nakedness satisfied him less. The room was freezing cold, while one side of them was baked from the fire. She clung to him again and again, for one orgasm after another, and he wondered if this was what people meant by ~~the~~ 'nymphomaniac'. When they were finished they had nothing to say to each other. There was the first fascination, while she was dressed, but then, in the candour of nakedness, everything fled away. They found, talking to each other, that they didn't even like each other much. On the bed she marvelled at him, her eyes closed, saying, "Oh, this is the best, the best!", but he felt quite separate, just an object to her, as wide-awake as he would be walking along the street. He felt friendly towards her. "I like you", he kept saying.

Really, it was the same as he'd felt with Hell and Algy. He was a kind of abstract force for her---his individuality was missing. And she didn't seem to be marvelling at him---only at his movements, his erection. He was a 'man' for her. Just 'man'. In her circle you expected 'the men' to be rash and wild, rather blind, violent, not aware of women as more than 'little things', as ~~the~~ 'gals' you were expected to crush in some way. Dick hated them

because he understood them!

She had spurts of anger---irritation that leapt out suddenly and tried to claw him, perhaps because he gave her neither the bad treatment she was used to nor the first hard lust.

Pinkie had no suspicions. She continued to flinch when she saw the hair-girl or when the Kaaba dancing company was mentioned.

→
To p. 958

~~pride kept him at it.~~ She had such a ~~pretty~~ delicate face, with dark eyes
 and fine, smooth cheeks; the white-hot fire in them had gone, and they tried
 to enjoy being together; but there was a hollow feeling; Hampton Court and
 the river looked bleak; they thought of their friends in London with whom they
 could be natural. As with ^{Hell} and Algy he fell to joking, and for the rest
 drinking and asking questions, ^{and with her} Pinkie had no suspicions; she continued to
~~blush when she saw Joy Deleate or when she was mentioned in conversation.~~

→ Granville found that she suspected his innocent journeys across London, when
 he was going to meet Glenning or 'Mac' Saunders, ^{but} and was at peace when he left
 the house to meet Hester, as, ^{with a touch of ~~much~~ irony, his} ~~he found, to his horror at first, the~~ ^{'lover'} ~~blush~~ was cal-
 -led. ^{Hester} ~~She~~ was a divorced woman with three children; that was the only real
 subject of conversation between them, her children, and she would show him pho-
 tographs of them; she had the same delicate, breathless manner of speech as
 Hell but there was a concentrated gleam in her eye that Hell lacked; she was
 clearer and more determined, with an obstinate will ~~sometimes~~ which couldn't
 be swerved; she said she dared not introduce him to the children because they
 might think badly of her; ~~morally~~ they would tell her parents, and her broth-
 er was a Jesuit priest; she had taken terrible risks to 'go' with him; her
 family watched her 'like' hawks, they'd done so since she divorced, and once her
 father, who was an army-man, ^{had} pushed her down the stairs just outside her flat,
 though they were a short flight with a safe landing at the bottom, ^{and threat-}
 ened to 'make mince-meat' of her, ^{because} Granville asked her why ^{she} held ^{this} ~~and~~
~~she replied that she held~~ ^{at the time} she was going with a man, ~~not what she was~~
 It was a macabre, finished world she described: the young men in it had a desp-
 -arate violence---she had left her husband because he would twist her arm 'fr-
 ightfully' if she came back late, ^{And the violence had a seed in her, too}
 she was always coming back late, it seemed, ^{always} and risking something. There was
 the same blindness as in Hell; everyone she described was wild and frighten-
 ing, a kind of massive caricature; she endowed them with stature, but it was
 set and known, universal; she said her father had got wind of him, Granville,

and had promised to search him out and give him 'a sound kick in the stomach'; he asked her, trying to joke as always and to throw off the burden, "Isn't that unsportsmanlike, the stomach? Shouldn't it be the arse?" But underneath he was sick and giddy. These dreadful threats! Dick, also, had got wind of his 'activities' in the empty flat---which Hanni now seemed to have vacated---and told him that Hester was known everywhere as 'the man-hole'.

Yet, though only his unanimated flesh was involved, in orgasm after orgasm separate from him and abstract, ~~a local vibration from his world~~ that provided ~~a mild enjoyment~~, he felt revived; ~~partly~~ it was what he seemed to need; it was in his flesh that he needed to revive and feel his first independence from Pinkie. ~~nothing was possible until he had achieved that~~ And now he felt easier at Chaworth Road; he could delay his ^{sexual} approaches to Pinkie as long as he liked, having exhausted himself elsewhere; ~~his~~ his approaches ^{were} ~~could~~ be more subtle and patient; ~~above all~~ ^{now} there was ^{suddenly} no chance of his suddenly giving way to an outburst; there was nothing pent-up in him; his flesh was now equal to hers and he shared, so to speak, her burden of guilt when they lay down side by side at night, usually without saying a word to each other. He began to feel light, and his appetite improved. Dick told him he looked 'drained of impurities', and that was precisely how he felt; his flesh, separate from him, was healed; his blood was clean; he felt cool and ordered. [He asked Dick what had happened to Hanni; why was she never at the flat? The reply was, "No particular reason. Why?" Nor had she appeared at Chaworth Road for some time; Pinkie hadn't seen her. Dick said she was working hard, he believed, though he hadn't seen too much of her himself, either.' Then he took Granville's arm in a nervous way and said, looking round, "We all have our ups and downs, don't we?" His lips were pale and Granville thought he ^{saw} ~~discerned~~ the faintest trembling in his fingers.

He ~~and Dick~~ began going to the New Studio theatre ^{you} and then ^{here} became members; it was another place to sit and take people to if ^{one} wanted to demonstrate a socially varied life; food could be had ^{here} and the tickets were on a sub-

scription basis. He got the money to join from Pinkie; he told her about the club and she nodded rather like someone considering a pay-claim, and ~~she~~ left the money on his desk before she ^{went out} ~~left~~ 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} ~~but~~ people ^l 'rapped it up'. There were to be no stars and the plays were ^{never} ~~not~~ 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 ^{keen} ~~unspoken~~ indignation in his life, and he wondered if ^{these 'protests'} ~~this~~ ^{in London} would contain it for him in some way. His life was taking more and more roots, 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} ~~theatre~~ 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 ~~what happened~~ ~~and at~~ 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 Pinkie'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 ~~picked against~~ his foreman, ~~who was in a merciless way, and unable, for a lot~~ of intricate reasons, to ask for trade-union protection or to get a new job, there was a play about a private soldier pitching himself against the 'brass-hats' at Corps headquarters; ~~then the story of~~ a young African nationalist

Or rather, it is simply the universal human condition, the real subject of the play, and this wasn't a class policy with its aim of a 'clean social sweep'.

against fighting a British colonial magistrate; a poor family in Wales threatened with an eviction-order; an Irishman, drinking wildly and ^{cursing} fulminating against 'the dirty bloody Limeys', trying to sing for a living; ~~then~~ a kind of suffragette play in which a man's ^{desires} perfectly healthy impulses were shown to be the cause of his wife's suicide. The trouble was that when you added all these protests together they made ^{you hate nearly everybody;} everyone ~~horrible and everyone~~ guilty; which left no one to address the protest to. Those people who weren't bosses might be foremen, ~~and~~ those who weren't foremen might be brass-hats, ~~and~~ those who were none of these might be British, ~~and~~ those who weren't British could easily be a man---for the suffragette play it was enough to be a man! So ^{each} though in each case the protagonist of the play was supposed to be good, and his opponent ~~socially evil, they cancelled each other out in the end.~~ The new play knocked the last ^{one} protagonist 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} became inured to it. He noticed that he didn't sit through ^{the plays} them in a spirit of criticism as he had done ^{during} the first ^{one} play about the sailor in Liverpool; ~~which he'd with Dick;~~ 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; ~~or~~ 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 ^{the renegade} among the ~~stick in the mud and old-fashioned~~ people whom ^{was attacking} the play ~~had been castigating~~. The protest-speeches covered up ^{truth} the lack of drama and substance. In one of the plays a character said

L. p.

of another, ~~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 ^{any} power in modern life, ~~it was the 'young Englander' brought into the theatre.~~ There were ~~many~~ ^{protests} trembling protests against a ruling class that no longer existed, ~~and~~ against an empire that had been disbanded. As Dick said, after you'd been there a number of times you realised that the theatre was as behind the times as it always had been. To his surprise, Granville continued to go; he ~~had~~ ^{had} begun to pick ^{up} the actors who were good and to distinguish between one man's production and another. [Dick was offended by the 'squealing' in the plays; he said that a man who suffered should ^{not} ~~never~~ ^{never} squeal or put the blame on other people. But Granville only smiled. There wasn't a trace of the 'orang-utang'. He seemed to have little objection to anything.

CHAPTER 31

To P. 962 (a)

New chapter
He thought again of the frightful accusations that had hammered at his brain in the middle of the night, but now there seemed no need for ~~such~~ ^{just} thoughts; he ^{just} simply waited for the evening to come, and every day unfolded slowly while he waited in totally passive state. [The river-party was a great success. It was a superb autumn evening, quite warm even, with the sunlight very yellow and pure-looking on the river; some of the roofs on either side looked as though they were made of gold for a moment, and the city made one massive roar that was like a new, exciting silence. There were many of the same faces as at the tail-and-hoof ball. They all sat about on deck or down in the long cabins while white-coated waiters brought round the drinks; ~~he watched~~ ^{called} the host, a small, flushed man with blond hair from Devon, Lord Runnook; ~~he~~ ^{by the arm} tasted one of the drinks from a waiter's tray, holding the waiter at his side for a moment, and then ~~muttered~~ ^{with sudden biting anger}, turning round to his wife, "I thought so, I bloodily well thought so! Would you believe it, he's done it again?" His wife tried to calm him, smiling at the guests and even

CHAPTER ²⁷

The river-party was a great success. It was a superb autumn evening, warm even, with the sunlight yellow and pure-looking on the river; some of the roofs on either side looked as though they were made of gold for a moment, and the city made one massive roar that was like a new, exciting silence. There were many of the same faces as at the Tail-and-Hoof ball. They all sat about on deck or down in the long cabins while white-coated waiters brought round the drinks; the host, a small, flushed man with blond hair called Lord Runnock, tasted one of the drinks from a waiter's tray, holding the waiter by the sleeve as he did so, and then suddenly muttered with biting anger, turning round to his wife, "I thought so, I bloodywell thought so! He's done it again!" His wife tried to calm him, smiling at the guests

→
[To P. 963]

said

and even

at the waiter with, "What happened, darling?" "He's opened the champagne!"
came the answer. "I told you not to!" ^{he added = the man.} "I said leave the champagne till I
tell you, but no--! Oh, Christ!" He shouted, ~~at the man~~, "Where's your brains,
for Christ's sake?" And the meek reply came, "I don't know, sir!"

n.p.

Elizabeth introduced them both to a bouncy young man with dark eyes whose name
he didn't catch; he talked very fast, mostly to Pinkie, and tapped his foot
restlessly on the deck while he glanced about, singing snatches of ^{old hit-} tunes. "Do
you know this one?" he would say like a machine-gun; and he would launch into
a tune, "Da-da-da-diddle-ly-da-da-dum-dum!" To Granville's surprise Pinkie
looked enthralled all the time, and seemed actually to be straining herself to
recognise the tune, though ^{this} ~~the task~~ was impossible because ^{it was too quick.} ~~of the rapid way he~~
~~went through it.~~ She had none of her usual forbearance and dignity; and though
the singing wasn't singing, and jarred on the nerves, ^{here 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. ~~The host sat in the gangway,~~
~~more genial-looking, but he suddenly glanced across at Granville, pouting,~~
~~his eyes harsh and full of enmity; presumably it was because he didn't know~~
~~him and wondered how he'd managed to invite himself, so Granville deliberately~~
~~leaned across to Elizabeth and said something to her; luckily she nodded and~~
~~smiled in a vivacious way; this had an immediate effect on Lord Runnock, who~~
~~gave him another look, soft and mild, his eyes like a girl's for a moment,~~
~~even with a special personal tenderness, and then he turned away, humming to~~
~~the guitarist. 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 the oil-lamps were put on, became a little more boisterous. The~~
~~bouncy young man kept up a constant chatter, taking his audience, Elizabeth~~
~~and Pinkie, for granted, whatever he said. And they were a rapt audience,~~
~~glued to him both of them, never missing a syllable or breath; but Gran-~~
~~vill was taken aback; for he'd never seen Elizabeth like that, so doc-~~

Nearly all the guests were personal friends of Runnock's---^{and}suddenly, from across the gangaway, 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 bounder, George!", then to Pinkie, "Isn't he extraordinary?" Granville listened for something extraordinary but there was only a string of references to odd things like streets, aircraft, houses in the country, card-games, turf for lawns---all in jumble he couldn't follow at all. And the whole time there was this vivacious wonderment from the women! Then there were hit-tunes again---"Do you remember this one? Ta-ta-ti-ti-dum-dum-ti-ti-ti!" Then there was the story of how he'd hitch-hiked fifty miles across Norway because his car had broken down---he'd stayed at a hotel where the food was good---and one where the food was bad---sometimes it had rained---and sometimes it hadn't. And at everything there was the same enthralled wonderment. Granville tried to puzzle it out. He tried to listen harder---to get the narrative thread he might have missed---and he tried to join in, laughing and showing surprise by lifting his eyebrows. George---if that was his name---said he'd been on the 'grand tour' the previous year: he pronounced it the French way and Granville thought this was a joke and roared with laughter, but

he tripped up badly here because the girls were nodding in a serious way. George had played baccarat with a lorry-driver in a bistrot at dawn---howls of laughter! But that wasn't funny! Granville's mouth fell open with surprise: how did they know when to laugh together? "George! Old thing!", it went on. And from George, "I was absolutely whacked ~~that~~ 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 Granville nearly nudged her to ~~shake her awake~~ ^{ask her a question} "Come, come, I can't ~~imagine~~ imagine you getting very tired!" Why not? She hadn't even met the chap before!

When the boat got back to the pier nearly everyone went on to the Melbourne, a quite fashionable club, by an arrangement that formed quickly as ~~everyone~~ ^{people} ~~were~~ ^{were} getting into their cars---"Coming to the Melbourne?", "We're off to the Melbourne, what about you?" He and Pinkie went in George's car; Elizabeth was travelling with Runnock. ~~George~~ 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 decarboxised 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~~ ^{stunning}, and went into a long speech about the 'double-carb'--- "The double-carbs 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

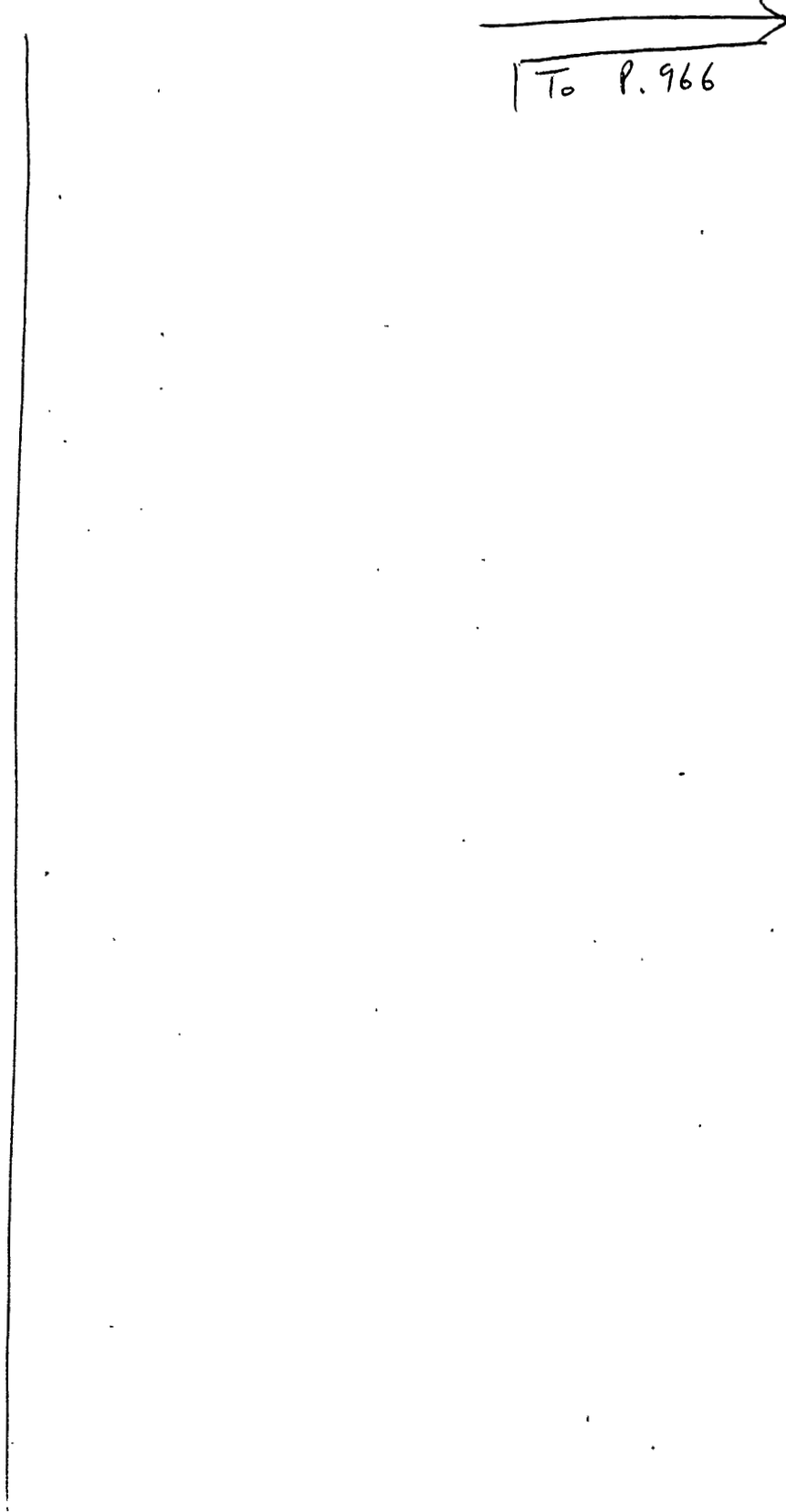
glance back. n.p. [At the Melbourne there was a long table under dim lights where most of the river-party guests sat. And once more there was champagne. Pinkie and George danced together---she showed him how to whirl round on the same spot without getting giddy: you keep your eyes on the other person's eyes! And she swept him round with ~~an~~ an oh-you-charming-devil look on her face, ~~her lips loose~~ ^{apparently} ~~seeming~~ more abandoned than ever she'd been with ~~the~~ ^{and} Grove, ~~but~~ in a role ^{Granville} he couldn't connect with her---it was just too extraordinary for words; he sat

and peace---reality---return. He could hardly take his eyes off her. Yet she wasn't pretty. There was only this composure. He sat gazing across the table at her, hardly blinking his eyes, not shifting his gaze even when he drank from his glass. He went from chair to chair drinking up the unfinished glasses, since the bottles were empty. And he even asked a glowering, handsome, thick-set man if he might finish his glass for him as he didn't appear to want it, and the man said to him after a long pause, "Yes, you may. I appreciate that you're honest about it---it's better than just doing it, like some other bastards." He said he was Runnock's brother, and began telling Granville how he hated most of the other people at the table. And he repeated, "I like you because you're honest---when you want to take ~~the~~ the booze out of my mouth you say so, so here it is, and I bet you've got the bloody neck to drink it, too." Granville said he had, but only if ^{they} he went half-way ^{with him}, which Runnock's brother did, scowling at one of the other guests and saying, "They're all rotters!"

At the end of the evening---Laura Lady Maine didn't come after all---there were arrangements with George to meet him again; he must come and have dinner at Chaworth Road, Pinkie said. Once or twice Granville addressed something to her in ^{the} the foyer outside, while they were ^{all} getting their coats on, but she appeared not to hear him. Her eyes passed him by, set on a task to which he was absent, but more than that, to which he was nothing but a dead object, flesh, just dead weight, without a spark of life in him; he'd had a similar sensation with Hell, but this was much worse---this cancelled out his whole past, self, body; he was nothing, just a thing in clothes; he existed only from the outside---a cardboard reality; ~~that~~ that was how he felt himself while she and Liz and George still pranced about among the coats and hats---just a prop for his clothes.

When they got back home, as they were going up the stairs in the darkness, he asked her, "Who was that young man, the one called George?" "Good God," she replied, "don't you know?" She half-turned in the darkness, nearly stopping: "That was Viscount Warsdale!" And the anger, pent up all these weeks, suddenly flooded over him---he knew he wouldn't be able to hold it. Already he'd begun to tremble---her last look at him, in the ^{foyer} ~~club~~, burned in his memory so! And now he'd been given the reason---a viscount! A viscount!

Viscount! How tawdry and cheap! How bestial! He was silent for a time as they continued up the stairs to the music-room, but there, before the light had been switched on, he burst out, shrieking at the top of his voice, beyond himself as he'd thought it was impossible for him to be now, "You dirty, filthy lot of crawling toads!"



To P. 966

The anger, pent up all these weeks suddenly flooded over him, and he knew he would be able to hold it. Already he'd begun to tremble. For the last look at him at the door, so small and faintly snubbing, as he'd never before been, he'd turned in his memory, and he had now been given the reason for it - a Viscount! How cowardly and cheap! again, and a final whirl round. Once or twice Granville addressed something to Pinkie but she appeared not to hear him; he was reminded ^{the way she'd} of ~~her~~ look ^{at him after} ~~after~~ he'd tipped her out of bed some weeks before, when she came into the kitchen and called ^{him} a 'damned little clerk', or similar words; her eyes passed him by, set on a task to which he was absent, but more than that, to which he was nothing ^{but a dead object just now dead weight,} ~~only~~ ^{of life} flesh, ~~ordinarily~~ without the spark in him; he had the same sensation as with Hell; he was simply a person in clothes; he was seen from the outside, and he could feel himself for a moment as if he only did exist ^{from} outside, without goodness or ^{inner} thought, a cardboard reality. When they got back, as they were going up the stairs in the darkness, he asked her, "Who was that young man?" "Good God," she replied, "don't you know?" She half-turned in the darkness, nearly stopping: "That was Viscount Warsdale!" He was silent for a time as they continued up the stairs but in the music-room, before the light had been switched on, he burst out, shrieking at the top of his voice, beyond himself ^{held} as he thought it was ~~now~~ impossible for him to be now. "You dirty, filthy lot of crawling toads! Stew in your own rotten juice instead of dragging other people into it---you filthy lot---you filthy lot---you filthy lot---!" He had never yelled at her so much; his voice echoed across the street in a ~~scattered~~ shriek, and the tears poured down on his face; "You heartless lot, you heartless lot!" It was like a frightening chant, almost a song! It appeared to be a complete shock to her; he was aware of her trembling in the darkness, and there was a gasp as if she'd ^{un} begun to sob. "What are you talking about?" she asked breathlessly. But his strange, shrieked chant went on, though he had no sense of choosing ^{his} the words; and it came out in bursts, like panted breath, halting and half-croaked like a frightful cough, "God, if I'd known---kowtowing to people like that---you filthy, bloody toads---ladies---where's your bloody---pride, both of you---going down on your arses---to some tuppenny-halfpenny ~~cheap~~ ^{cheap} bloody kid---the manners of the gutter---just because---of some cheap bloody title---what a foul, ~~dirty~~ ^{dirty} couple---of bastards---you are---aristocracy---you people---!"

The tears continued to pour down his face and into his mouth. He was sure, underneath, that she would accept what he said, not show anger or offence, because of the sheer helpless nature of his outburst; he thought she would want to nurse him in some way and calm him down.

~~What a filthy exhibition--~~ ~~What a filthy exhibition--~~

l.c. / Suddenly she leaned forward in the darkness and with a swift, coolly aimed movement swung her hand-bag, which had sharp metal edges, into his face, drawing blood; he put his hand up and lowered his head and was at once calm;

u.p. "It's all right," he said quietly, "I'm sorry." [She stood there quivering, her teeth chattering. And they continued to stand in the half-darkness, their legs astride. She seemed to recover and started to move away, and this had the effect of reviving his anger at once: he imitated her talking to George, bending his body in a mock-wheedling fashion, "Oh, come, come, I can't imagine you getting tired!" And he added in a clear voice, as if making a matter-of-fact announcement of some kind, "You stupid, arse-crawling bitch!" He slammed out of the room clutching at his mouth and as he walked up the stairs he heard her cough in a pathetic way as if all the sorrows of life had suddenly heaped themselves on her and she couldn't go on any more; he stopped, to return, but his pride made him go on up to the kitchen where he ~~at once~~ made himself two eggs and a rasher of bacon, with a pot of tea; she was asleep by the time he returned downstairs. He decided not to drink wine or beer for a few days to let his blood cool; ^{his mouth swelled up and Pinkie} ~~and after three or four days she~~ made a joke about it next evening to Hell, saying how jealous he'd been because she danced with Viscount Warsdale; Hell wanted to know at once how 'Georgey' was, she hadn't seen him for years; her interest quickened in the most unusual way. In three or four days he felt he could joke about it, too; "What's that you keep in your hand-bag," he asked ^{Pinkie,} ~~her~~ "a knuckle-duster or something?"

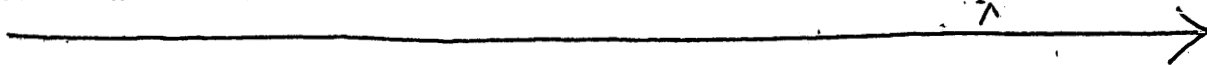
Grove appeared at the house again, but this time only for a few minutes, on his way to a party. Again Granville was acutely aware of his benevolence;

standing at his side he felt that Pinkie was completely vindicated and right---to choose Grove. Yet he knew that when alone again he would fall back to the twisted logic by which she was his rightful wife. But there was something extraordinarily bright and safe in Grove's presence which remained with him.

He noticed a change in Pinkie: she was more cautious in the way she talked about other people these days. If he appeared to criticise someone, say Hell or Cerberus, she withheld herself with a demureness he'd never seen in her before; she turned his criticism back on him, as if the spirit of criticism in him was something dark, belonging to the past---before he ~~became~~ became a gay ~~and~~ dog. He felt from her silence that his criticism was an unnecessary departure from the light and reasonable attitudes that now governed the house.

His outburst after the river-party was quickly forgotten; he'd had too much to drink and that was that; it was true, he told himself, he'd drunk an enormous amount without realising it! Again Pinkie told him, as she'd done in Basrah, that he was 'such a sunny person' and that it was always a pity to see him 'burying his head in theories'.

l.c. An element in her character had waned recently; she was a less extravagant person. On the surface her extravagance was ~~much~~ much greater than before---he noticed that she wore tight trousers in the evening and sexy blouses like one of the ~~xxx~~ 'mice', and she no longer seemed nervous of other people's opinion, she seldom had a shy and lonely ^x expression now; But this was only a social extravagance; underneath she seemed more reserved, he could ~~feel~~ feel her deciding not to say something out of social policy. But this new outward extravagance seemed to satisfy her; her old arrogant way of speech was gone but she was happier. While he thought of this as Grove's influence on her he couldn't account for it in Grove's personality; why should her extravagance have gone?

There was a second much stiffer note from the U.K. Compound in Basrah 

asking again for the sum of £11.14.2, but this time it gave him a little twinge of enjoyment---to think that he'd laid down all claims to ~~other~~ people's good opinion. He began to wake up in the morning with the feeling that he'd put his body in pawn the night before, to the public; it had been revealed naked and he didn't know how much of it had been seen, and what shame he'd brought on himself; sometimes ~~also~~ he woke up in the middle of the night with his heart beating fast, a sense of shame and regret paralysing him like physical shock; ^{this} ~~it~~ was shame, he found, at what he thought he might have said to someone in the evening; ^{he had a} ~~there was~~ the vague memory of many conversations; particularly those he'd had after a few glasses of something were lost to him in their detail, and it was here, in what he couldn't remember, that the chief source of shame and useless conjecture lay; or else he would remember something he actually had said, and it would dart into his mind like a frightful flame, making him sweat! It might only be a small remark he'd made but if it had slipped out without preparation, and particularly if there had been a silence afterwards, a lull in the talk, he felt the encroachment of shame; ~~then~~ next morning, or in the middle of the night, the words would appear before him like a lighted sign; it might be a remark that he'd enjoyed one of the plays at 'Protest Hall', after which, particularly if there had been a ^{lull in the talk,} ~~silence~~, he would feel, ^{silently} judged as ^{the sort of} a person who approved of all the plays at 'Protest Hall', or ^{also} ~~of~~ the whole of that one; he would conclude that the person he'd been talking to thought ~~of~~ him as ^{fool,} ~~stupid~~, and there ^{was} ~~would be~~ no way of retrieving himself from this verdict; it was the verdict that he saw held above him like a red neon-sign in the dead of the night. Thus, he found he was more interested in other people's good opinion than he'd thought!

One night this took a graphic form in a dream which haunted him for days. It was after a gay night. There was a silver,

gleaming, grotesque object in the sky making a trail of smoke, quite far away, but in a few moments it was close overhead, vast and silver, with four engines that made singularly little noise; it floated nearer and nearer---he was standing in the centre of a large town---until it suddenly dived down and crashed in flames, still silently, enveloping some of the shops of the road he was standing in; he jumped into a dark grocery shop for shelter, pulling two others with him^{—were these Pinkie and Grove?—} and there they crouched waiting for all the debris to fall; then they went out on to the road again but all they saw was a black gap in the shops and no real debris, nor flames; and the area was already cordoned off; there was no great alarm, and one of the people he was with made a joke about it; he assumed that only the pilot was killed but afterwards he learned that a hundred or so people had died; yet the street was hardly disturbed. The sight of the huge floating plane worried him all day. It appeared to him to be a picture of total calamity which people didn't record in their faces; life went on without alarm. There was even a certain anger against the ^{other} people ^{who had been} for being killed.

Hester, the lover, told him that she'd met ~~Clockwork~~^{Clockwork}, whose real name was Barnes, and that ^{Clockwork} ~~he~~^{she} knew through Hanni 'all there was to know' about ^{him} ~~Crany~~^{him}. She then recited his own life to him with artful glances. He'd thrown up his job in Basrah because his wife had refused to go out ^{there} with him^{she said;} there was 'a skeleton in his cupboard'---he came from a working family; he lived

n.p. ed on his wife; he was of rather an 'hysterical' nature; he was good-hearted and would never make any sort of 'official', which was why he would probably come to nothing in his work; his life was 'ignominious'; he was in love with a girl in the Kaaba dancing company. ^{They} were sitting by the river gazing across at the castle when she recited ^{this to} him; ^{and} when she asked ~~him~~ if it was all true he said simply, "Yes"; "Including the dancing girl?" she asked. He nodded again, pouting, "Yes!" She only smiled. A grudging, careless attitude had grown over her. ~~"What do you think about it?" he asked her. "Nothing"~~ came the reply; they caught the next train back to London and hardly addressed a word to each other. ^{He} waited to be stunned by what she'd said, but felt only a mild irritation; he even felt no resentment against Hanni. He thought of approaching Dick in the confidential manner they had sometimes adopted at training school: "I say, tell old Hanni to watch her tongue, will you? I mean, I don't mind, but---!" And Dick would be light and clear: "Of course, I will, old chap!" But he said nothing.

n.p. Hanni hadn't been to the house for some weeks, and Dick, ^{disliked} the 'mole weeds' ^{and only} ^{occasionally} ~~phoned sometimes~~ Pinkie said that Hanni was appearing at 'nearly every fashionable party in London' ^{these days;} ~~so she'd heard;~~ she didn't say with whom, and he didn't offer her the information ~~the other~~ ^{No. 2.} Hester had given him, namely that Hanni and 'Clockwork' were so much ^{together.} love that they were 'like children'. ^{But then} ~~On the other hand,~~ she probably knew it and was ^{keeping} ~~withholding~~ it from him on the grounds that he might disapprove. ^{The} following evening, as if she'd heard them ^{talking,} Hanni appeared at the door downstairs in a new coat, ^{she'd bought,} looking remarkably radiant and calm, with an unusual ^{stillness} ~~quietness~~ around her; it wasn't the quietness of withdrawal but deeper; she walked easily and her face was cool and smooth; and she appeared bigger and more erect, and even seemed to look down at him for a moment. He found he had a nostalgia for ^{her and Dick} ~~them~~ ^{friends} as ^{a couple} and asked her where Dick was; oh, he ~~wasn't~~ wouldn't be coming round that evening! ~~Again he looked back on the period when~~ ~~he'd been in~~ the house nearly every day, as one of light and clarity, even thought. She told

him he looked tired and must sleep more; Pinkie treated her with deference like a special guest, and he heard her closing the door downstairs against possible visitors. When Hanni had gone, ^{and later Pinkie} she told him that Dick had 'broken down' on the subject of Joe Clockwork; ^{Hanni had} she ~~had~~ stayed away from Hampton Court for three or four nights running, and he'd got 'absolutely desparate'; there ^{been} was no where for him to phone; he didn't know where Joe Clockwork lived; all he knew was that they worked in the same office, ~~more or less~~, but she ^{had} blocked all personal calls and he couldn't get through. She'd never really forgiven him for the pale girl, when he'd come in 'reeking of her', ^{above all} as Hanni had said, and ^{she for making an 'exhibition'} had made an exhibition in front of Pinkie and Granville. She was especially sensitive about her dignity as far as he, Pip, was concerned, Pinkie said. Also Joe Clockwork had been an 'exciting proposition'; here was a boy, virtually, with a genuinely queer streak who needed ~~really~~ a nurse, and she had obliged, overlooking the fact that she might fall in love ^{with him} which she did do, or at least she'd become infatuated; she ~~had~~ told Pinkie ~~that~~ there was something extraordinarily 'sad and ancient' in Clockwork which she hadn't suspected at all, and that she ^{had} ~~really~~ spend hours simply gazing into his ^{face} ~~hours~~ and lying on a bed with him, doing nothing; she said the silence would 'seem to be going along', there wouldn't be the sense of a nervous pause, of not doing anything, as there was with Dick; it was a 'great rest' for her; she was amazed at the 'dignity' that lay in Clockwork unseen. ^{Then} However, Dick had broken down; he'd stayed outside the Foreign Office waiting for her, and ^{had} more or less pulled her ^{off} with him; ^{Pinkie said} although, ^{Hanni was} Pinkie said, 'if you ask me', ~~she was~~ as tickled as a kitten that she'd 'brought him low' ^{at last} by ~~she will~~, which in the first place ^{it had been} He and Pinkie agreed ~~with each other~~ that Hanni certainly had 'grit'. Dick had managed to get her down to Hampton Court, where he told her that she must never sleep with another man again; he hid his face in her lap and said in a broken voice that he couldn't reason about it, he knew he hadn't got a leg to stand on, he knew it didn't fit in with the rest of his life or with what he believed or what he said every day, but if she touched another man

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he'd go away and divorce her at once; and before looking up he asked her, "Will you take that as final?" There was silence and Dick repeated the question, still not looking up; and at last Hanni said, "Yes." Granville imagined her looking calm and proud like a goddess when she said this; and with this unearthly calm round her she had come over to see them; she and Dick were now back at Hampton Court, and all further meetings with ~~Clockwork~~ were to be ones of friendship.

Granville found more and more that the idea of Pinkie sleeping with Gr-
^{gave}ove ~~provided~~ him ~~with~~ a sharp sexual excitement; the pain was an element in the alchemy, its base metal; and he found that this surpassed his old desire for her. It overwhelmed his relation with the other Hester. The anger threatened to rise now and then, he often wanted to hit ^{Pinkie} ~~her~~ but it was never more than a passing twitch in his fingers, and he always checked himself in the interests of this new grim passion. He hid the photographs he'd found of her and would glance at them secretly, whenever he wished to arouse his passion; he was astonished at what desire there was in him, too; it seemed inexhaustible; it was less and less possible to satisfy it; Pinkie began to wonder at this, too, and told Hanni that he was 'Herculean'. For her as well the new quiet, oblique sex was satisfactory; and she told him suddenly one evening when they were on their way out to the cafe that she could happily go on with this life for ever; when she came in late these days she always took a bath, and ^{again he thought} ~~and~~ he smelt ~~men's~~ sperm on the towel she ~~had~~ used; that, too, was a matter of quick, painful excitement; it was a marvellous liberation from the suffocating part of sex; it was now free, and no loyalties, much less moral speeches, were ~~now~~ required. Pinkie had to suppress her anger, too; ~~for~~ she started ^{up} whenever Joy Celeste was mentioned; he watched her doing the same as himself; her eyes flared up, then her face grew set and deliberate. They even began confiding in each other about their love-making. This was momentous, and happened quite by accident. He suddenly said in a genial voice, "Oh, come, why do you try and hide these things? I won't bite, you know!"

And she began ~~by~~ telling him about the approaches the 'young man with the ear-ring' had made to her, when she'd called ^{on him} ~~round~~ ~~much~~ to Granville's dismay. He remembered how relieved he ^{had} been that she returned to the house before ten o'clock, and ^{for she} had joked with Dick about it; but now he regretted that she hadn't more to tell. As Pinkie said, "You want your bread buttered on both sides!" Grove wasn't mentioned directly; he had the impression that this was sacred for her, and above all other pleasures; he appreciated her character in this. Their talk was an exciting preliminary to love. It freed them from the shadows of the past, from the aching void of belonging exclusively to each other when they shared nothing and weren't real kin; it accepted the emptiness between them; they established each other again as separate people with interesting lives of their own; it filled the lack of a rock of trust underneath---the swirling waters were received, they plunged into them! They slept with each other more. No hot feelings were involved. They kept their distance from each other as part of the pleasure; it was not unlike Glenning's 'vestist' activities with his wife. They were like two strangers, but these strangers took surprising liberties with each other; that was the attraction. They were familiar and thrillingly new; she began to need him sexually, and to find him 'interesting'. Apart from that he would spend whole afternoons listening to the Creole Shake over and over again, with a glass in his hand. He went to a concert and heard the German Requiem; in the first movement, ^{during the 'For all flesh is as grass'} he had the sensation of floating away quite beyond himself, almost into death, to the borders of nullity, rising and falling with the music as if he was being lifted up bodily and then lowered again, each time with less and less body so that the sky came nearer and nearer, and he was almost received into it, bathed in melodies and sunk down and limp; he was crushed, and stumbled back home afterwards; there now seemed two parts of himself---the music wasn't absorbed into his life; it only made him float outwards; it didn't enter his flesh, changing him, as it always had before; it couldn't get through to his numbed and paralysed flesh, so stayed in the floating regions, lulling him and

during 'For all flesh is as grass',

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 ^{he} 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 ~~it~~ to blood.

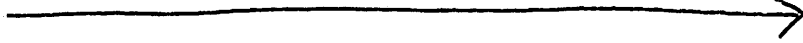
Aunt Beatrice called and had them over to lunch; Pinkie had predicted this---Deryk ^{would feel} ~~had told~~ Beatrice about the river-party and their social stock ^{would} ~~had~~ soared up. They had a meal under a portrait of one of the ¹⁹ ~~eighteenth~~ century Gryshams. Beatrice was all charm and 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} ~~with a disgusted irritation he didn't think was in her~~ and got up ~~at once~~ 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} He did his best, and said, "Mummy's so tired these days, poor thing!" Pinkie's theory afterwards was that the old girl ~~had realised~~ ^{was} had realised ~~that~~ their invitation to the river-party ~~had been~~ 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~~ 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 con-

clusions, 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 ~~other~~ 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; ~~then~~ ~~clay~~ ~~he kept telling himself~~ 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 or 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 from a public point of view~~ he saw himself as someone else would see him---lying on the bed for hours, listening to the 'Creole Shake' for hours, ~~and~~ ~~end with a glass on his bed~~ waiting impatiently for the next phone-call; he ^{imagined} wasn't ashamed in himself, left to himself, but he was when he ~~wasn't~~ ~~somebody's~~ ~~else's~~ eyes on his life; it was social shame that came from his not ~~he could only see himself in relation to others;~~ being properly alone; ~~there was no one in his life to indicate him~~ ^{just before Meadham} he was no longer ever alone, really. He remembered feeling 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 ~~he~~ would set the alarm for an earlier hour, just after dawn; Pinkie thought he was made, 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} ^{anything} ^{about} ~~was~~ ~~even~~ ~~nothing~~ 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} ~~sat~~ at his desk. ~~thoughts simply wouldn't follow the requirements of social respectability~~ ~~seemed to be affected~~

He went into a cafeteria near St. Paul's for a morning coffee, to revive his memories ~~xxxxxx~~ 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~~ ^{his} ~~xxxx~~life, to try to bring a ~~xxx~~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~~ ^{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 pencil 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 expedience or reputation, not to consult other men before the truth. That is, to live with God in mind.'

He wrote it all out later in the form of ~~a~~ a letter to ~~W~~evinson, of all people; he wondered if he was going cuckoo but went on with it. It lay on his desk for some time and he even put it in an envelope; then he threw it 

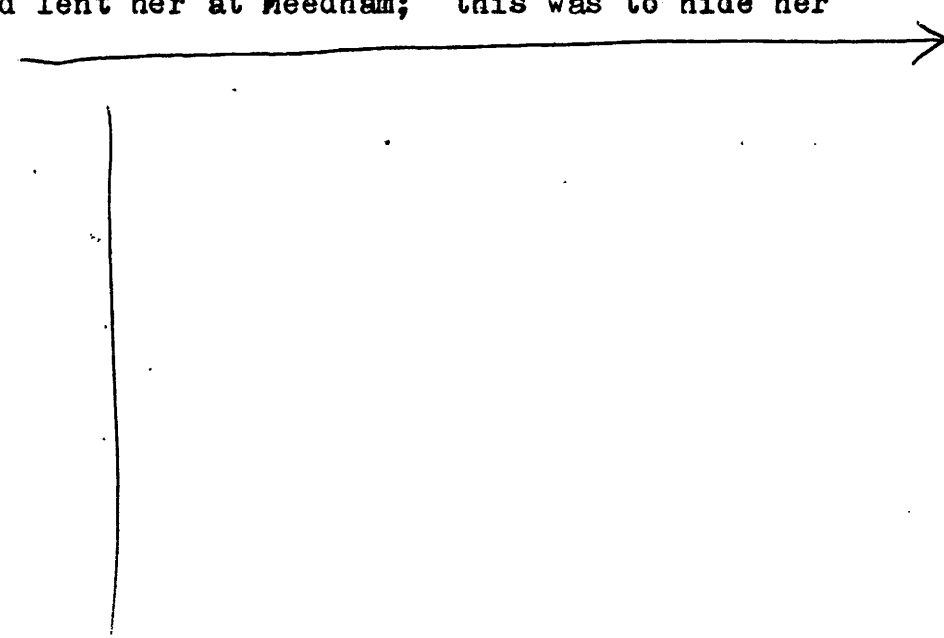
away. He was surprised how much he thought about Nevinson these days, though he hadn't met him. He was aware of Nevinson watching over his life and calling to him like a father. And apparently he thought this letter would vindicate his conduct in some way. There was a reply from Mohammed, quite cheerful, asking when he was coming back and assuming that his leave had been prolonged once again; as for Granville's 'Help me!' ^{letter} it seemed to have passed unnoticed, for which he wasn't sorry. He puzzled how this could ^{have been,} be so, and concluded that Mohammed had taken it as 'So help me God!'. ^{on a similar level as} ~~an exclamation that could be found in the grammar book,~~ ^{something like} a translation of his own tired 'Allah, wa-allah!'. There was no news at the Basrah office about his having offered his resignation. That was odd."

Joyce the pale girl gave a party ^{at her excitement - fear} to which everyone they knew was invited, except for the ~~weeds~~ 'weeds'; the whole Kaaba dancing company was there. Dick had evidently told Joyce about her fascinating pallor; she was dressed in ^{next to nothing - bare arms,} ~~as little as possible consonant with dressing at all,~~ bare shoulders, and her skirt was ^{so tight she could hardly walk.} ~~as short as the fashion allowed.~~ It was like old times: Dick and Hanni were there, dancing separately; Pinkie came, though she went off early; there was the old excited sense, between the four of them, of laying themselves bare to each other as they didn't otherwise, and without saying a word, only winking as they passed during a dance, or stopping at the bar to chat for a moment. Larry ^{Vice} got drunk and wedged himself in between the wall and a divan bed, and fell asleep. Granville and the pale girl discovered a sympathy for each other, due partly to their common friendship with Dick, and they danced together several times in succession; Dick was applying himself to a girl in the Kaaba company but came over to him when he was alone for a moment and said in a low voice, smiling, "Listen, old sport, I can see the danger-signal! Do you know what I mean?" Granville shook his head and they looked into each other's eyes with the perfect openness they only had at parties; Dick went on ^{is say} ^{Pip} that he ought to 'make up his mind' ~~and~~ whether he wanted Joy or Joyce or who; he didn't mind what the verdict was as long as he knew;

it was only in the interests of their not getting their 'wires crossed'; he only wanted to know; and there was a look of real objective curiosity in his eyes; but Granville couldn't tell him anything, only shrugged his shoulders and smiled back.

As if Dick had planted a suggestion in his mind he found himself with the pale girl again, talking to her confidentially, mostly about Dick: together they watched him on the other side of the room with his dainty, smiling Moroccan girl, and laughed when he made a characteristic little gesture like taking the girl's glass to re-fill it and giving her a twinkling smile at the same time; and they watched him when he danced, his cheek pressed hard against her's. An intimacy was growing up between them through Dick! Otherwise they had nothing to talk about, especially as Joyce rarely spoke. Dick had certainly changed her in the last few weeks. She was now tremulously aware of herself, and kept glancing down in a slow way at her bare arms and her bosom, and her pallor seemed even more of a veil, soft and yet impenetrable, than before; also Dick had given her a style of intimate speech; she asked Granville all sorts of quiet questions; her composure was extraordinary; would he ever go back to the Middle East? what were the women like out there? did he think she was too tall for a woman? She gazed before her all the time, still and reflective; this was the girl who'd sat over love-magazines in the music-room for two or three hours of an evening, saying not a word! He wondered at Dick's patience.

Pinkie came to the party in a flowing, black gown rather like the one Elizabeth had lent her at Needham; this was to hide her stomach mostly; she



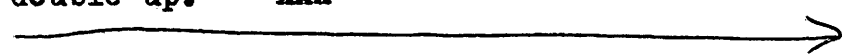
had a few drinks and danced twice with Dick, ^{again} and then left saying she felt
 h.p. tired. [Larry] ~~Vice~~ woke up for a moment, surprised to find himself in such
 a ^{right} position, and said, Blinking up at the other guests, "How do you people
 manage to sleep standing up?", and then ~~he~~ went off again. Granville heard
 the hair-girl on the other side of the room, in the half-darkness, cry, "Oh,
 no, you don't, no^t with my dad around!" and "Anybody seen Larry? Vicey,
 n.p. Vicey!", then she made her clapping laugh. [He noticed Alice the snake-girl
 sitting in a corner, quiet as always, like a dark, round-cheeked boy with her
 thick legs pushed out in front of her, just as he'd seen her first at the
 Marquis, with Dick; she smiled a charming good-evening to him while he was
 talking to Joyce, and later he went over and sat at her side on the floor, en-
 joying the casual intimacy that joined him to everyone. She ^{glanced} looked down at
 him and said, "Your wife's having a good time, I see." He nodded, look-
 ing round involuntarily for Pinkie, but she ~~had~~ ^{was} gone; ^{then that} he remembered that
 for Alice's ^{the snake-girl} ~~purpose~~ Hanni was his wife. ^{Hanni} At that moment she was dancing quite
 near them, laughing and kicking up her legs, with one of the men from the ^{Kaaba} ~~dance~~
 h.p. ~~company~~. [He was about to explain that she wasn't his wife at all when
 Alice said, she added, "You wouldn't think he was in trouble to look at him, would you?"
 "Who?" ^{Granville} ~~Granville~~ asked. [She nodded towards Dick, who was dancing on the
 other side of the room. ~~"What"~~ "What trouble do you mean?" he asked.
 "Wife-trouble!" [There was a pause and Granville asked, "Does he have wife-
 trouble?" "Well, you ought to know," she murmured, turning to him with a
 smile, reminding him of ^{Kit} ~~Kot~~ for a moment with her tom^{boyish} manner, "you're
 his best friend, aren't you?" "Yes," he said; and he repeated his quest-
 ion, saying he hadn't heard of any 'wife-trouble'; to which she replied, "Oh,
 w^ell, perhaps I'd better keep my trap shut." [But later she told him, after
 he'd said that he felt he ought to know as a friend: Dick's wife was sleeping
 with the Kaaba company's publicity man; Granville said quickly, "Grove?",
 a distant form of the old panic starting in him, a shadow; "Yes," she said.
 ital' "Who is?" he asked, not choosing his words properly. [What do you mean?"

n.p. she said, again looking down at him. "Who's sleeping with Grove?" "Dick's wife!" "Hanni?" "Yes." "Good Lord!" He had the impulse to run home and tell Pinkie; it was nearly amusing! But he ~~persisted with his question~~ continued to give her his attention, quite still, where he was sitting. "Yes," she went on, "you wouldn't think it from the way he comes to the Marquis and talks to Grove as easy as anything, would you?" Again, "Who?" "Dick." She then told him that Dick had thrown up his job 'in Basrah' to see her 'through the baby', ~~though one wouldn't think she was having a baby to see her kicking up her legs now, would one?~~ Granville's excitement ~~now~~ turned into the familiar sexual one, pained and fascinated, as he recognised that for 'Dick's wife' he had to read Pinkie! He was surprised how little ^{this girl} ~~she~~ knew Dick; and he had assumed some intimacy between them from the beginning; he asked her, what had Dick told her about his life?

q.c. Nothing, really. They just 'sat together'. ^{Dick had} ~~He~~ tried to kiss her once but she^d turned Sidney the snake on to him, and he^d thought it was poisonous and jumped on a table with a green expression and said to her, "Now look here, ^e sweet, cobras can be dangerous---we've got laws in this country", drawing his trousers up like a skirt. After that they became friends, and she agreed to 'sit with him' if he wanted to. She'd got 'all the dope' about him from the head of the dancing troupe who lived in the same house as Grove and heard him and Dick's wife 'roaring and slapping' each other upstairs in one of the bedrooms.

~~Alice began laughing with a scream. And they talk about these things. He says, Boy, sometimes I want to go down and join in, it sounds so good. They're so cute and clever with each other, he says, you hear smacks and ^{kisses} and ~~horries~~ and then the bed gives a clang like the gong in a boxing match! He always said to his wife about half-past six in the evening when there were sounds of preparation from upstairs, "Well, here we go, ^{Excuse me,} ~~Settle~~, seconds out of the ring!" Sometimes there was a 'knock-out' in the first round and sometimes the fight would be won on points and go on for two hours or more; sometimes they heard a cry like, "You're driving me mad!" or "It's terrific!" which made them (double up; and the ^{this dancer} ~~leader of the dance-troupe~~ had also told her that Grove~~

Alice began laughing: "It's a scream the way he talks about them two! He ~~says~~ says, Boy, sometimes I want to go upstairs and join in, it sounds so good! He says you hear smacks and kisses and yells and then the bed gives a clang like the gong in a boxing match! When things start moving upstairs round about half-past six in the evening he says to the wife, 'Well, here we go, luscious, seconds out of the ring!', and then it starts! Sometimes there's a knock-out in the first round, he says, and sometimes they go on for three hours or more and win on points. Friday nights are the nights, he says! Sometimes ~~they make~~ you hear ~~something like~~ 'em shout, "You're driving me mad!" or "It's terrific!", which makes this dancer and his wife just double up!" ~~and~~




At the end of this Alice gazed before her, stretching her legs out and yawning, and added, "To cap it all the baby she's going to have is Grove's!"

This stunned him so much that at first he only smiled and nodded, refusing to absorb the words; he got her to repeat it, and she said the same words again. She added, "I don't like that sort of behaviour. Somebody ought to tell him. Look at him dancing over there!"

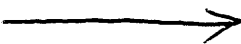
And at that moment Dick gazed across the room at Hanni while he was dancing and gave her a pleasant little smile, his cheek still close to the Morrocan girl's. Granville glanced at Alice sideways; she was so like a young boy, without a trace of wickedness! His teeth began to chatter, and he took another drink swiftly; he was in a delirious state not unlike joy. The pale girl passed and smiled down at him.

Alice also said that Grove was always 'on' to Dick's wife about living in Chaworth Road; he said it was the 'filthiest sink' in London, and that he feared it was slowly corrupting her; she needed all the sympathy other people could manage because she was suffering a 'real crucifixion'.

ital
n.p. So that was why she'd talked about the crucifixion once, in the kitchen! And this made him, Granville, her high priest---he was the mob that stoned and spat at her! He could hardly control the chattering of his teeth and Alice asked him if he was cold. She went on to say, about 'Dick', that you wouldn't think he was a 'violent' sort of person to look at him, but according to Grove he was: he kept his wife indoors forcibly and he quite often beat her up; worst of all, he was unable to excite her passions! Alice said she had only realised how true this probably was when she'd seen him dancing on that table pulling his trousers up in such an unmanly way, because of a harmless snake!

How 'Dick' managed to get his girls was difficult to imagine, she said, because his touch---according to Grove---was 'the kiss of death' to his own wife! Grove had said of 'Dick' that he was a 'nice enough person' but Pinkie needed somebody with more love in their hearts, who went out to people more, and could give her the 'full life' she was yearning for. And Grove had offered Pinkie a 'money-back guarantee', as he had called it, that within a year or two she would be completely free of her 'mania' that she wasn't 'wanted'; he would 'open society' *for her*

Granville pulled the snake-girl to her feet and made her dance with him, which she did awkwardly, saying to him when he swung her round fast, "Hey, do you want a snake-bite, too?" He was surprised how calm his face felt; his heart had beat fast before but now he was cool; a great coldness began to come over him, making him shiver. People were dancing drowsily now. At the end of the tune he let her go absently, hardly aware ~~ma~~ of dropping her hand. He stood in the middle of the room for a time, absent to everything.

He strolled into the basement-area of the house, alone, as dawn came up---it was like a shadow being lifted from behind the roofs. Outside it was quite still, everything like dust that had settled for ever, in this first light; to his surprise he found 

TTo P.983 (a)

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~~just that had settled for ever, in this first light~~ to his surprise he found
Dick leaning against the wall, looking up at the sky, also alone; ^{Dick} he turned
slowly as if expecting him and murmured, "Hallo, there, old sport." [Granville
le asked him at once, "Did you know Pinkie's baby wasn't mine?" [There was a
pause and Dick replied quietly, "Yes, of course I did." [Why didn't you tell
me then?" [Evitez les complications, Pip, especially in matters conjugal".
And he added in a more confidential voice, "You know you're a boob. You ought
to have got out long ago, as I tried to tell you." [Granville nodded. [Dick
went on, "Never mind! You know now."

Dick stayed with ^{Joyce} ~~Joyce~~ and he walked home alone. The dawn was grey
with heavy clouds and the first buses were starting; now and then a sleepy
person walked by, his steps enclosed in the great hush that lay on ^{the streets.} ~~everything.~~
He took a bath when he got back, so numbed in his senses that it was like dipping
someone else's ^{flesh} ~~body~~ into the water; he hardly had the strength to lift
himself out, and yet he couldn't think of sleeping. He wanted to go up and
make himself a cup of tea but the desire died suddenly; he didn't want to see
Pinkie. [In the evening Dick told him, "I stayed the whole night, and she gave
me two eggs and a lovely rasher of bacon in the morning." He repeated that

Granville ought to make up his mind; he could see his fascination for Joyce 'growing fast'. He added, "You can't have your cake and eat it, you know!" To which Granville said with a limp smile, "Your cake, you mean." "Yes, ^{but} you can have it if you like," Dick said, and again his eyes were perfectly clear, so light and devoid of ~~any dark~~ possessiveness! He then went on talking: there was nothing better than sleeping with a 'new' woman; ^{that} ~~the~~ breakfast ^{with} ~~held~~ ^{Joyce been really} ~~had~~ ^{the following} ~~the intimacy of it was so to speak~~ 'classical'; ^{it made him think} ~~he thought~~ of Homer and the 'rosy-fingered dawn'. He said that the first four pleasures in his life were, in ^{the following} ~~this~~ order: sleeping with a woman for the first time ~~was~~ (although 'one could come a cropper there very ^{badly} ~~badly~~ sometimes'); sleeping with Hanni, meaning by her 'someone of long standing'; walking alone in a big city at dawn; and, last and fourth, friendship. He then threw in the idea that if ^{you} ~~one~~ ^{were} 'really keen' on a married woman ^{you} ~~one~~ shouldn't consider the husband 'to the point of withering the roots of love'. [Granville was disappointed that friendship should come so low in the list; but he felt close to Dick as he'd never done before, perhaps because ^{every} ~~everything~~ else was finished for him, ~~he'd have to make a new life, new friends.~~ He was happy with Dick. He felt he was fit for Dick only when he was ~~perfectly~~ free, like this.

He tried to go on with the same life but could no longer break his face into a smile; he went with people like a ghost and he gave up ~~phoning~~ the other Hester; they met a last time at Hampton Court, ~~and~~ after he involuntarily drew back from her, ~~once~~, not knowing what he was doing at all, thinking of the party at Joyce's, she snapped at him, ~~without apparently intending a double-entendre~~, "Oh, go to hell!" [The money ran out altogether and he had an hour's pale, disjointed conversation with Pinkie about it; she didn't seem to be blaming him for it in any way; he avoided her eyes these days, and she, following suit as she usually did, avoided his in the same way. As for the child, silence ^{had} ~~was~~ been so customary between them in the old days that it was easy to revive. But their new form of sex persisted: it even flourished on the increased reserve between them. For the first time their love was

safely beyond affection and words of endearment. It gave him a burning desire even stronger than before; he was now taking ~~not only~~ ^{more} a stranger but an enemy.

They decided to ask Maimbury for a loan; he was to do the asking, by phone; there was Maimbury's cool voice at the other end asking, "Who? Who did you say it was?" He asked for twenty-five pounds and Maimbury agreed without hesitation, as cool as before. He went to collect it the same afternoon and was ushered into the office by one of the clerks; for some seconds Maimbury didn't look up but ^tcontinued ~~to~~ ^{ing} write something on the side of a type-written sheet in a slow hand, in the silence of the room; then he looked up, his eyes calm and soft, and murmured quietly, "Well, hullo, Philip." And he stood up to shake hands; the twenty-five pounds were brought in and counted, and when it was done ^{Maimbury's} his manner became ^{more} easy and confidential; ~~at once~~ "How's Hester?" he asked; "She's very well!"; "Good!" On the way back he passed T.I.M. and saw a messenger hasten inside; the entrance was bleak and inanimately hostile to him, ~~penetrating~~ hollow and dark, and he crossed over the road to ^{avoid} being recognised by the commissionaire. He was still wearing his tropical jacket; it had turned a bit yellow, perhaps from constant smoky atmospheres, and the weather was decidedly chilly for it. These days he ate little, and sat staring before him. Sometimes he told himself that a mistake had been made---how could people know for sure who the father was? But he'd finished with that sort of reasoning. [He slept with Joyce, more or less because he'd been asked not to in such an inviting way. Sharing the same fascinating pale secret as Dick was a pleasure, although, still, his own flesh was separate from him, and her softness was lost on him really. Once he and Dick met on her doorstep and burst out laughing; they didn't ring the bell but went off to a pub and then stayed together all evening to make sure that the other ~~one~~ didn't go back. It made their sense of intimacy even stronger. Joyce told them both---separately---that she'd never heard two men talk ^{so} ~~so~~ admiringly ^{of} ~~about~~ each other; she gave the impression that they were two aspec-

ts of the same being for her, and a perfect complement to each other, ~~not that she admitted to having relations with the other, it wasn't mentioned~~ ^{was} There wasn't a trace of disloyalty in her eyes when the three of them were together; he and Dick agreed that this was flattering to them; they were 'sound'.

~~He tried to see the pale girl, her body as she lay by him, or under him, as Dick had done. He tried to lose himself in her pale beneficence of flesh. But it was hopeless. She was simply 'Joyce' to him, another person, whose fears and fragile, haunted, girlish dreaming showed ever so quickly and delicately in her eyes as she blinked and gazed at the ceiling and smiled in a distant, sad way. He couldn't get beyond the humanity. He was hopeless, it seemed, for pure sex! Oh, for a little of Dick's disharmony!~~

~~They began walking together, hand in hand, by the river, and seemed to enjoy it better. And they gave up going to bed. A cup of coffee, or lying ^{on the} ~~in front~~ floor in front of the fire with their heads together, was nicer.~~

~~Pinkie's 'faun' was realised, in a way: he had no thoughts, and hardly talked. Girls remarkably like Ginger and Lucy, with the same casual good will and passivity, mostly friends of Joyce, collected at the house. And he was astonished at how easily they took him. 'Pip' meant fun and a free meal.~~

~~He was -- happy? Was it happiness -- something burning and consuming, laying him waste?~~

One afternoon he made the decision to get out; it was the effect of meeting a friend of Hell's called Tim, whom Cerberus brought round to the house. He had a round face with rather staring eyes and his lips were strangely full and crimson; he was impeccably dressed, with a rolled umbrella, and spoke carefully, his vowels as rounded as his lips. And he began asking Granville questions, one after the other; he'd heard from Hell of his arrival some weeks ago; his name was Granville, wasn't it? He believed he worked in the Middle East? That must be very interesting? Didn't one's nerves get edgy out there ---so he had heard? How long would he be in England? Would the situation in the Middle East blow up again, did he think? He must know a great deal about the 'Arab psychology'!

His tone ^{gave} ~~invested~~ Granville ~~with~~ too much importance; since they'd never met before it sounded insinuating, with an edge of contempt. He spoke with a slow gravity. His lips, bright and moist, were set in a kind of pontifical deliberation, which also seemed on the edge of mockery; and yet when he smiled his eyes were honest and clear. His cheeks were plump; and his round lips suggested to Granville a riotous appetite which his manner ^{covered up;} ~~refused to confess~~ also he spoke unctiously and softly. Granville felt more and more distressed and was also convinced that in the strangest way he was causing the young man to behave like this, and that at any other time he would have looked quite different to him, and spoken quite differently! He answered as casually as possible, careful not to give a sign that he condoned the tone of importance; he tried to throw the questions back ---did the young man live in ^{this} ~~the~~ district? did he often come here? But they rebounded in his face, and he found himself answering the same questions himself; also he noticed that his own voice had a hollow,

rols suggested a walk, his eyebrows raised a little as if to ask for the privilege of his company---could he spare the time? And he agreed like a hypnotised animal; they strolled through the City and the questions went on! He felt pale and too hot, and ~~not~~ ungainly in his stride. He tried to talk about Kurdistan and the Alpine-like flowers in the mountains there, but his words faltered and he couldn't get the hollow sound out of his voice. Some sort of strange pressure was being exercised by the young man, he felt; and he noticed Tim's rolled black umbrella again as if he hadn't seen it properly before. It was tap-tapping on the pavement; and also he had a black suit, buttoned fully at the front. What did he do for a living? He tried to find out, ~~deviously~~, but couldn't form the slightest impression. Every question rebounded on him. The more he talked, the more he made a fool of himself. He went on talking out of nervousness. No real ideas came to his head. "Turkistan's just like Scotland!" he cried. His voice sounded so thin and high ~~in his head~~. The air was heavy with emptiness. The emptiness had crept into him, covering the whole of the City as well like a vast invisible blanket suddenly coming down over the banks and offices and narrow streets. Tim was silent now. He ^{had} pillaged Granville's soul---and the verdict was silence! ^{Granville} He wanted to get away. As he turned to announce that he must be off he was assailed ^{by} with a dreadful sense of waste; he remembered it acutely from two years before; it was a sense of having time on his hands and ~~of having~~ no obligation or place in the world, and of being acknowledged for nothing by other people. His clothes felt drab, ~~and~~ his body seemed to have shrunk into something like dust, on the verge of becoming pure air; he was nothing for the other man; he knew it! ^{W-} "Well---" he began; ^{wanted to} but he could ~~hardly~~ turn tail and run off. The New Studio theatre club came up ^{in the conversation}; Tim had seen one of the plays; Granville said---but apparently without his own voice, and without there being an idea in his head, much less a picture of what he was talking about---that he hadn't liked that one. There was assilence. Tim then said that as 'the son of peasants'---he paused again---'and not of decayed nobility'---and here he gave Granville a

meaning

itals long ~~sideways~~ look---he liked the plays at the Studio theatre; but he under-
 stood how 'the language and some of the ideas' would be 'too strong for some
 people'. ^{Granville} He made a faltering reply, and Tim considered that he'd withered
 him. [At last Granville managed to get away; he almost ran back to the house,
 his eyes lowered from passers-by; when he got back he went straight to the ba-
 throom and took a hot bath; then he changed into clean underwear and a clean
 shirt; ~~he felt the other man's questions as a stain on him, and he was hollow-~~
~~ed out; he felt that the last piece of identity had been wrested from him!~~
 He had no self! Therefore what did it matter where he transported it? [He
 resolved to get his job back, if that was possible. He ~~phoned~~ Dick at once
 and his answer was, "Good, Pip. I think that's wise. Would you like me to
 go along to the old cove now?" "Yes." And a meeting with Nevinson was ar-
 ganged. [He found out from Hanni that Dick had saved the situation for him weeks
 ago. He'd gone to Nevinson and told him not to take the letter of resignation
 too seriously---Granville was having 'family-trouble'; she said he wasn't to
 let Dick see he knew this; it ^{was} ~~had been~~ a secret; ~~however,~~ ^{but} she had let Pinkie
 into the secret. [Granville could find out nothing about the Basrah off-
 ice; Dick said he wasn't sure he'd get the old job back; in fact, he thought
 it unlikely. [Nevinson was just as he imagined him: tall and rugged, with
 bushy eyebrows. His hair was slightly tussled like a boy's, yellowish; at
 first he was confidential, very much man-to-man. ["Well, I've been hearing
 all about you"; he smiled boyishly and went on, "As you probably know, I'm
 new to this outfit---and not liking the desk-work at all!" [Here he smiled,
 and Granville murmured something sympathetic. [Nevinson shifted a paper on
 his desk. "Well, as far as I can see you've been doing a first-class job of
 work out there---first-class!" ["Thank you." [A pause. ["It's just what we
 want, you see, ~~somebody~~ ^{meant} who gets out and mixes with people." [He ~~met~~ ^{meant} by this
 mixing with Arab people, ~~it transpired~~. He said that if anything 'blew up'
 in the Middle East they wanted to see it didn't blow up 'under T.I.M.' as well,
 and that meant keeping people's sympathy, which couldn't be done by treating

them like 'skivvies'; Granville had got out among people and hadn't 'parked' himself in the 'foyer of the British Embassy' waiting for the next dinner invitation like some people; it was just what they wanted; he was very pleased; awfully pleased. [Another pause.] ~~Where was he leading?~~ → The office was very quiet; its windows gave out on to a narrow courtyard, with other lighted offices on the ~~other~~ ^{opposite} side. A persian carpet covered nearly the whole floor, and a tall lamp with tassles exactly like the one Granville had had in his own office stood ~~just~~ behind Nevinso's chair, giving the room the same cosy and glowing look. Nevinso blinked. It was coming now. He pulled out a file.

"Now about this report of yours, we've had quite a lot ^{of} discussion about it--

--" He scratched his head--- "Well, we found it a bit high-flown if you see what I mean. Mind you---" He looked up, his eyebrows raised. "I think

it's awfully good myself. But what we want out of these yearly reports is facts. I mean, we can't go blazing off into ^o politics and religion, can we--- not on the office-level?" And he showed Granville a page of his report;

"Look at this", and he pointed to the words, "The middle-class is the instrument of Christ." "We can't have that, can we?" [No, quite!] said Granville.

"I expect you know we've decided on a policy of expansion," Nevinso went on.

"No," Granville replied. [Well, what we thought we might do is to put the Basrah office in the care of Beirut for the time being, so we sent our Beirut chap over there---he's new, awfully nice, a chap called Blair!] [Oh!] He felt giddy for a moment but managed to smile politely. [It isn't very sensible geographically, of course, but it'll have to do until we get the Middle East working as one unit.] [This means he's sitting at my desk, does it?" he asked bluntly. Nevinso looked down and murmured, "Well, ^{old} chap, you did let the job go, didn't you?" [Yes, of course, I realise I'm lucky enough to get a job at all. I just wanted to find out. This means somebody else is working over me, doesn't it? In the same office?" [For the time being, yes.] Your pay'll be the same, you needn't worry about that." Granville ^{flushed} flashed with indignation. "But I can't see why I'm being offered the job at all!"

n.p. "It's perfectly clear, old chap," Nevinson said, "we need you out there!"

Granville wondered at himself for getting indignant; he'd got his job back, what more did he want? "This Blair-chap", Nevinson went on, ^shad been on the Middle East circuit for years with another company and ^{we}they were frightfully lucky to get him. He ^{just what we}was what they needed to pull ^{risk}the whole outfit together.

"After all," ^{Nevinson}he added after a pause, "we can't ~~have~~ ^{risk}you going off the rails again, can we?" [It was that or nothing; so he ^{nodded.}accepted. There was one change: no travel-allowance and no 'swindle-sheet'; in effect, his pay had been reduced. And he would have to ask permission to leave Basrah at any time; the old jaunts to Kirkuk and Mosul, ~~and~~ to the 'Alp-like hills' of Kurdistan, were finished.] Nevinson saw him to the door with a friendly, "Good bye, old chap." Then he added quietly, "You know, I'm very sorry about this. If you'd come to me a couple of months ago and asked for the Beirut office we'd have given it to you like a shot. But then this happened!" And his last words were, "I don't suppose you've had a very pleasant time but if you pull your weight things'll be all right." [He went straight from the office to a travel-bureau and booked a passage from Naples to Beirut; he wouldn't stop at Genoa this time; he needed to be alone; and he needed a sea voyage to bring his health round.] How would he face Mohammed now, as Mr. Blair's assistant? The atmosphere would be gone. He'd be tied to a desk with fixed hours. Mohammed would see that he ^{was}no longer a subordinate, ^{now,}his stature would be gone. The evenings by the river wouldn't be free any more. What a fool he'd been! And he could have had the Beirut office! So much for Dick's advice! In his mind he began to blame Dick for the whole sourse of events, telling himself that if he'd been given ^{the slightest}an idea that he ^{could}would get the Beirut office for the asking he would never have hung on in London like that, ^{only}but Dick had discouraged his initiative; ^{but}however, this was little comfort, ^{and}since he didn't believe it.

The question that came to his mind again and again was, what had happened to the night of the eclipse? Where was its effect? Why hadn't he felt

the triumph? Why wasn't he aware of it moving in him and changing him?

n. p. ~~There was Christ?~~ ^{He} thought ^{perhaps} it might be all right in Basrah ^{even now,} if he could manage to keep a certain stillness. He should try to keep before him an image of himself as small and therefore as undeserving; if he did this a spark might return to him, from outside; he must go about his work without worrying what other people thought ^{of him;} for instance, he must even try to enjoy losing stature in Mohammed's eyes; if he did so he wouldn't lose stature, perhaps; nothing could hurt silence if he kept to it; only pride was the easiest thing to hurt; he must let himself fall back into silence. ^{h. p.} [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} ~~a whippet~~ 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 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.

Granville was once more struck by 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, ~~even if he did fall into an irritable mood he would change at once in my own company, and suppress it out of this strange universal courtesy he had.~~ 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} ~~an obvious~~ swine.' 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, Granville asked himself, why should he leave? Again the absurdity of insisting on clear forms occurred to him: why not be a subordinate here? 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; he sat in the centre of the room and already the house was filled with his spirit.

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'd 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. ~~Perhaps he was seeing it all in contrast to the slums of Basrah, but for the first time he had an idea of the prosperity it represented. Almost a country silence lay over the street; it was like a village towered into the city. He saw it as a stranger for the first time. Would he see it as even more another world when he returned again?~~

He sat with them in the backroom, with the window overlooking the gardens open at the bottom. His mother divined that something 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. ^{of Abbott's Road} ~~It reminded him of the time he'd lost Kit.~~ He always returned to this world 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 and he kept wandering off. He kissed his mother good bye and shook hands strongly with his father; he more or less stumbled out of the house, with his mother's eyes on him.

His boat was to leave Naples a day later than he'd been told, so he stayed a day more in London; in the morning, when nobody else was there, the phone rang and he heard Grove's voice at the other end saying, "Pinkie? Pinkie?" So full of joy and expectation and relief! He put the phone ~~down~~ back as quietly as he could, without answering it. He even felt the flicker of a smile on his face, as if it wasn't his own face. And the trembling never left him for a moment, it was like a permanent bodily condition.

Grove came over that evening, alone, having made the arrangement to do so before ~~Granville had~~^{he'd} delayed his trip. Grove played the piano and sang while Pinkie swept out the music-room; meanwhile Granville sat upstairs trying to read the paper; nothing bore a relation to him---the house, ~~its noises~~, Pinkie's broom hitting against the wainscoting, Grove singing, the boat-ticket in his pocket. The piano downstairs stopped suddenly and he heard Grove's laughter that always had the power to raise your hopes without really touching your heart. Then there was Pinkie's voice, imploring him, "Oh, don't, darling, not now---~~later!~~" Only a little while!" Only a little while more and he'll be gone! A pale anger rose in him and he strode out on to the staircase. But he stopped. She'd spoken so imploringly! He didn't know she could sound like that. So tender and pleading! And he'd thought of her as hard! Why hadn't she pleaded with him like that? He didn't know it was in her voice to do so! .

He listened again, on the landing. There was Grove: "Come on, Grisly, let's go out!" Grisly was one of her nicknames from school---which he'd never used. 'Erisly Grysham'. Pinkie replied, patiently, as if to a child, "Yes, darling, yes!" And he realised for the first time---not painfully but in a clear and blinding and staggering way---that ~~was~~ she was in love! She couldn't change that. She'd tried, perhaps. Even, she'd wanted to! But

she couldn't! ^{Because} ~~She was helpless, with this xxxxxxxxxx~~
 e.c. ~~xxxxxxxx~~ lovely tenderness. 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!

He walked further down the stairs and had the sense of losing
 his body so that his steps hardly made an impression on him. This
 was the night of the eclipse! It was in his life now! It had
 come down from his thoughts into his life! And he felt bodiless---
 the stairs were nothing to him, his pain was nothing, nor his trem-
 bling! ^{They} ~~It~~ didn't matter, ~~He~~ didn't matter! He could have walked
 down to the music-room at that moment in the most easy and ~~laugh~~ ^{smiling}
~~ing~~ joy and put his hands on them both and sat talking to them and
 heard them telling each other 'darling' and 'sweetheart' without
 the slightest sense ~~that~~ of being connected ^{to them} any more! There was a
 shudder of relief ~~that~~ through his body that seemed to drain all the
 poisons away. Yet he was still in pain! But it wasn't really his
 any more. There was something beyond life in him, for the first
 time. It was like touching Christ, it was 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. Pinkie was pure!
 She was pure! The tears poured down his face but with triumph---
 it was like his own triumph! He'd surrendered! He'd surrendered ^{her}
 up to her own life! ~~that was his triumph!~~

He parted from her casually next day; she lay on the bed,
 remote ~~from~~ from him; he asked her not to come downstairs to see him
 off; it would make too much of a good bye.

"Well, cheerio," he said at the door of the bedroom, and waved
 his hand.

"Cheerio, darling!" She waved, too, in exactly the same way
 as he'd done, with a little flutter of fingers; just before he
 turned away she blew him a kiss as she'd done on the train to
 Meedham, with a bright look for a moment.

Dick had said jokingly the evening before that he was blowed
 if he was going to give him a second send-off! So they'd just
 shaken hands briefly. Hanni had promised to come over to say good
 bye but didn't appear. The day was dull and he travelled to the

station in a dazed state, seeing nothing; it was also sultry, quite unusual for late autumn, and the sweat poured out of him; on the boat across to France he caught sight of himself in a mirror and was astonished to see how haggard he was, with yellowish bags under his eyes; his hair was lank and greasy; he shuddered when he thought of the house in Basrah, silent and closed. And he saw Pinkie in his mind, a stranger to him, far, far away, going about her own concerns. "Only a little while!", he heard her say again.
