

THE BATTLE: THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH, PART 3

AUTHOR: C. S. LEWIS

PRESENTER: DOUG OLENA

VENUE: LIFE TOGETHER ZOOM

DATE: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024

PART 3: THE BATTLE

CHAPTER 15: "THE DESCENT OF THE GODS"

DALL•E 3: In a majestic scene from C. S. Lewis's 'That Hideous Strength', the Fisher-King and Merlin are featured. The Fisher-King, a serene, wise figure with the appearance of a thirty-year-old, sits in the evening dusk. He is dressed in colorful golden medieval attire, symbolizing nobility. Beside him, Merlin, displaying a dour expression mixed with surprise, has an aged look with long hair and beard, suggesting a man of hundreds of years. He is dressed in the festive robes of Logres. The room, illuminated by the frosty red light transitioning to a star-lit scene through uncurtained windows, is adorned with medieval-style decor including tapestries and ornate furniture. This setting creates a magical, serene atmosphere, blending the indoor ambience with the mystical outdoors.



The Descent of the Gods



A CONFLUENCE OF INTELLIGENCES

A MYTHOLOGY OF THE PLANETS

DESCENT OF THE GODS: PREPARATION OF THE HOUSE

- “All of you had better stay together—in the kitchen, perhaps. Do not come upstairs. Tonight I will bring Merlin before my Masters, all five of them—Viritrilbia, Perelandra, Malacandra, Glund, and Lurga. He will be opened. Powers will pass into him.” 849

THE OYARSA DESCEND ON ST. ANNE'S

- "There is no Oyarsa in Heaven who has not got his representative on Earth." 848
- "It was these earthly wraiths of the high intelligences that men met in old times when they reported that they had seen the gods." 849

THE OYARSA DESCEND ON ST. ANNE'S

- "If anyone had gone up the stairs and on to the lobby outside the Blue Room, he would have found something other than fear that barred his way—an almost physical resistance. If he had succeeded in forcing his way forward against it, he would have come into a region of tingling sounds that were clearly not voices though they had articulation." 853

READING THE PASSAGES:

CONNECTION WITH THE INTELLIGENCES

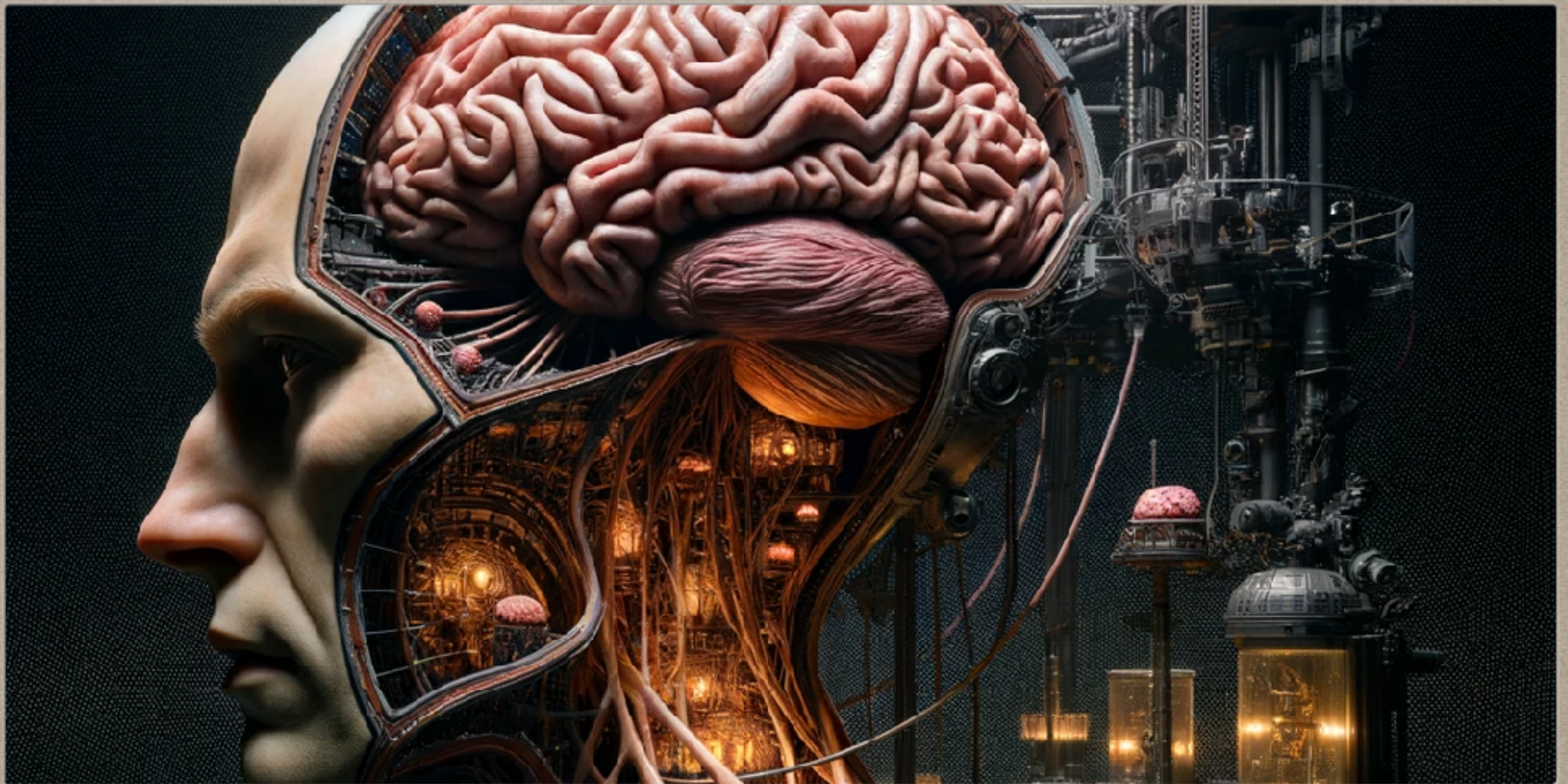
- The descriptions of the Oyarsa, Merlin and the Pendragon, and the residents of the kitchen, tell a story.
- Intelligences have an effect on us.
 - What is that effect?
 - Why doesn't it require physical contact, only proximity?

DESCENT OF THE GODS: PREPARATION OF MERLIN

- "At his coming there was holiday in the Blue Room. The two mortals, momentarily caught up into the Gloria which those five excellent Natures perpetually sing, forgot for a time the lower and more immediate purpose of their meeting. Then they proceeded to operation. Merlin received the power into him." 862

DESCENT OF THE GODS: PREPARATION OF MERLIN

- "He looked different next day. Partly because his beard had been shaved; but also, because he was no longer his own man. No one doubted that his final severance from the body was near. Later in the day MacPhee drove him off and dropped him in the neighborhood of Belbury." 862



A CONFLUENCE OF INTELLIGENCES

MERLIN INSERTED INTO BELBURY

MERLIN'S ARRIVAL AT BELBURY

- Merlin, speaking Latin, claims he was answering to an advertisement for a language specialist.
- He is taken to the room that houses the tramp.
- Using the powers granted by the planetary intelligences, Merlin forces the tramp to speak, then translates to Latin for Wither and Frost.

MARK STUDDOCK GAINS A BACKBONE

- In attendance, realizing he had been duped, Mark Studdock steels himself to reject the claims of the NICE, its proponents, and practices.
- The muddle he arrived in earlier, is starting to fade as he recognizes the philosophy of the NICE is contrary to human flourishing.
- He realizes he has been stitched up by the NICE for the murder of Hingst to subvert his choices.

FROST AND STUDDOCK IN THE OBJECTIVE ROOM

- "Meanwhile, in the Objective Room, something like a crisis had developed between Mark and Professor Frost." 871
- "On the floor lay a large crucifix, almost life size, a work of art in the Spanish tradition, ghastly and realistic." 871
- Frost commands Mark to desecrate the crucifix, step on the face of the figure on the cross as part of the initiation to the inner circle.

FROST AND STUDDOCK IN THE OBJECTIVE ROOM

- Not brought up in a religious environment and had never believed, Studdock nevertheless flinches to do the deed required of him.
- "At this moment, therefore, it crossed his mind for the very first time that there might conceivably be something in it." 872
- If this is part of the initiation, it seemed not only superfluous, but objectionable.

FROST AND STUDDOCK IN THE OBJECTIVE ROOM

- "'This,' said Mark, pointing with an undefined reluctance to the horrible white figure on the cross. 'This is all surely a pure superstition.'" 872
- "Mark himself was surprised at the emotions he was undergoing. He did not regard the image with anything at all like a religious feeling. Most emphatically it did not belong to that idea of the Straight or Normal or Wholesome which had, for the last few days, been his support against what he now knew of the innermost circle at Belbury." 872-3

FROST AND STUDDOCK IN THE OBJECTIVE ROOM

- Mark's "simple antithesis of the Normal and the Diseased had obviously failed to take something into account. Why was the crucifix there? Why were more than half the poison pictures religious?" 873
- "He was on the verge of obeying, and getting the whole silly business over, when the defenselessness of the figure deterred him." 873

FROST AND STUDDOCK IN THE OBJECTIVE ROOM

- "He found himself looking at the crucifix in a new way—neither as a piece of wood nor a monument of superstition but as a bit of history." 874
- "Christianity was nonsense, but one did not doubt that the man had lived and had been executed thus by the Belbury of those days. And that, as he suddenly saw, explained why this image, though not itself an image of the Straight or Normal, was yet in opposition to crooked Belbury." 874

FROST AND STUDDOCK IN THE OBJECTIVE ROOM

- Mark finally refuses to do the deed, and shortly after, Wither, Merlin, and the beggar enter the room.

PART 3: THE BATTLE

CHAPTER 16: "BANQUET AT BELBURY"

DALL•E 3: A tumultuous scene in an opulent ballroom, where a lavish banquet is being disrupted by a multitude of wild animals. The ballroom is richly decorated with sparkling chandeliers, luxurious curtains, and long tables laden with an array of fine foods. Amidst the chaos, various wild animals including elephants, bears, tigers, monkeys, dogs, and birds are causing havoc. They are seen harassing guests, trampling over the tables and food, and causing destruction throughout the room. Guests are either fleeing in terror or trying to avoid the animals. The scene captures the extreme chaos and panic as the serene elegance of the banquet is turned upside down by the wild animal intrusion.



Banquet at Belbury

THE BANQUET

- The strange priest stood patiently behind the tramp's chair. For the rest, nothing of importance happened until the King's health had been drunk and Jules rose to make his speech." 883

JULES MAKES HIS SPEECH . . .

WITHER ATTEMPTS TO QUELL THE DISTURBANCE

- “Tidies and fogleman—I sheel foor that we all—er—most steeply rebut the defensible, though, I trust, lavatory, Aspasia which gleams to have selected our redeemed inspector this deceiving. It would—ah—be shark, very shark, from anyone’s debenture. . . .” 887

WITHER ATTEMPTS TO QUELL THE DISTURBANCE

- The woman who had laughed rose hastily from her chair. The man seated next to her heard her murmur in his ear, "Vood wooloo." He took in the meaningless syllables and her unnatural expression at one moment. Both for some reason infuriated him. 887
- Back to reading . . .

FAIRY HARDCASTLE

- Fairy Hardcastle locks the door of the banquet hall.
- Out of that confusion, with a howl of terror, broke the tiger. It happened so quickly that Mark hardly took it in. He saw the hideous head, the cat's snarl of the mouth, the flaming eyes. He heard a shot—the last. Then the tiger had disappeared again. Something fat and white and bloodied was down among the feet of the scrummers." 890

FAIRY HARDCASTLE

- "Mark could not recognize it at first for the face, from where he stood, was upside down and the grimaces disguised it until it was quite dead. Then he recognized Miss Hardcastle." 890
- "There seemed to be a new animal in the room every minute." 890

NEXT STEPS

- Merlin leaves "the dining room, after the curse of babel was well fixed upon the enemies." releases Mr. Maggs, a prisoner of the NICE, and husband to Ivy at St. Anne's. 893
- Merlin delivers a message from Ivy to Tom Maggs.
- Rescuing Mark, he hands him a letter from Denniston.

WITHER STRAIK AND FILOSTRATO

- "In the end, the three men stood naked before the Head—gaunt, big-boned Straik; Filostrato, a wobbling mountain of fat; Wither, an obscene senility." 897
- The Head demands another head, and Wither sacrifices Filostrato. Wither kills Straik, then Mr. Bultitude mauls and kills Wither.