

After the first text slide. Mark's meditations

In fact, he was going to see Jane in what he now felt to be her proper world. But not his. For he now thought that with all his lifelong eagerness to reach an inner circle he had chosen the wrong circle. 905

He saw himself as this new circle must see him—as one more little vulgarian, just like the Steeles and the Cossers, dull, inconspicuous, frightened, calculating, cold. 905

“How did other people—people like Denniston or Dimble—find it so easy to saunter through the world with all their muscles relaxed and a careless eye roving the horizon, bubbling over with fancy and humor, sensitive to beauty, not continually on their guard and not needing to be? What was the secret of that fine, easy laughter which he could not by any efforts imitate? Everything about them was different.” 905

They could not even fling themselves into chairs without suggesting by the very posture of their limbs a certain lordliness, a leonine indolence. There was elbow room in their lives, as there had never been in his. They were Hearts: he was only a Spade. . . . Jane was a Heart. 905-906

When she first crossed the dry and dusty world which his mind inhabited she had been like a spring shower; in opening himself to it he had not been mistaken. He had gone wrong only in assuming that

marriage, by itself, gave him either power or title to appropriate that freshness. 906

Return to 4

The struggle between Logres and Britain

“Something we may call Britain is always haunted by something we may call Logres. Haven’t you noticed that we are two countries? After every Arthur, a Mordred; behind every Milton, a Cromwell: a nation of poets, a nation of shopkeepers; the home of Sidney—and of Cecil Rhodes. Is it any wonder they call us hypocrites? But what they mistake for hypocrisy is really the struggle between Logres and Britain.”

917

This haunting turned out to be not only from the other side of the invisible wall. Ransom was summoned to the bedside of an old man then dying in Cumberland. His name would mean nothing to you if I told it. That man was the Pendragon, the successor of Arthur and Uther and Cassibelaun. Then we learned the truth. There has been a secret Logres in the very heart of Britain all these years; an unbroken succession of Pendragons. 917

This haunting is no peculiarity of ours. Every people has its own haunter. There’s no special privilege for England—no nonsense about a chosen nation. We speak about Logres because it is our haunting, the one we know about.” 918

When Logres really dominates Britain, when the goddess Reason, the divine clearness, is really enthroned in France, when the order of Heaven is really followed in China—why, then it will be spring. But meantime, our concern is with Logres. 919

Return to 21

Venus has her way

“This is very odd behavior for Mr. Bultitude. You don’t think, my dear, that the stranger might be a she bear?”

“Oh, don’t say that, Sir!” exclaimed Ivy with extreme dismay.

“I think that’s the truth, Ivy. I strongly suspect that this is the future Mrs. Bultitude.”

“It’ll be the present Mrs. Bultitude if we sit here talking about it much longer,” said MacPhee, rising to his feet.

“Oh, dear, what shall we do?” said Ivy.

“I am sure Mr. Bultitude is quite equal to the situation,” replied the Director. “At present, the lady is refreshing herself. Sine Cerere et Baccho (without Ceres and Bacchus), Dimble. We can trust them to manage their own affairs.” 925

“Take her, Bultitude. But not in the house. Jane, open the other window, the French Window. It is like a night in July.”

The window swung open and the two bears went blundering out into the warmth and the wetness. Everyone noticed how light it had become. 927

“It’s warm enough to have the window open anyway,” said the Director. And as the window was opened Baron Corvo, the jackdaw hopped out and there was a scuffle and a chattering just outside.

“Another love affair,” said Mrs. Dimble. “It sounds as if Jack had found a Jill. . . . What a delicious night!” 925

“Hullo!” said Denniston, “the old mare is excited too.”

“Sh! Listen!” said Jane.

“That’s a different horse,” said Denniston.

“It’s a stallion,” said Camilla.

“This,” said MacPhee with great emphasis, “is becoming indecent.”

“On the contrary,” said Ransom, “decent, in the old sense, decens, fitting, is just what it is. Venus herself is over St. Anne’s.” 925-926

“I suppose we may think ourselves lucky that no giraffes, hippopotami, elephants, or the like have seen fit to—God almighty, what’s that?” For as he spoke a long gray flexible tube came in between the swaying curtains and, passing over MacPhee’s shoulder, helped itself to a bunch of bananas.

“In the name of Hell where’s all them beasts coming from?” he said.

“They are the liberated prisoners from Belbury,” said the Director. “She comes more near the Earth than she was wont to— to make Earth sane. Perelandra is all about us and Man is no longer isolated. We are now as we ought to be—between the angels who are our elder brothers and the beasts who are our jesters, servants and playfellows.” 928-929

“By your leave, Mr. Director,” said MacPhee sternly. “I’ll just draw these curtains. You seem to forget there are ladies present.”

“No,” said Grace Ironwood in a voice as strong as his. “There will be nothing unfit for anyone to see. Draw them wider. How light it is! Brighter than moonlight: almost brighter than day. A great dome of light stands over the whole garden. Look! The elephants are dancing. How high they lift their feet. And they go round and round. And oh, look!— how they lift their trunks. And how ceremonial they are. It is like a minuet of giants. They are not like the other animals. They are a sort of good demons.” 929

return to 24

“Can we be with you to the very end?” said Jane.

“Child,” said the Director, “you should not stay till then.”

“Why, Sir?”

“You are waited for.”

“Me, Sir?” 930

“Yes. Your husband is waiting for you in the Lodge. It was your own marriage chamber that you prepared. Should you not go to him?”

“Must I go now?”

“If you leave the decision with me, it is now that I would send you.”

“Then I will go, Sir. But—but—am I a bear or a hedgehog?”

“More. But not less. Go in obedience and you will find love. You will have no more dreams. Have children instead. Urendi Maleldil.” 930

return to 25 Mark and Jane Studdock reading