

That Hideous Strength Study Guide

That Hideous Strength by C. S. Lewis

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Plot Summary

The novel *That Hideous Strength* by C.S. Lewis carries on a plot that begins in the first book in this trilogy, *Out of the Silent Planet*, and continues through the second novel *Perelandra*. This story can, however, be read without first reading the other two books. This novel deals with the issue of science versus ethics, among others. It follows the main characters, Mr. and Mrs. Studdock, as they become supporters of opposites sides of this battle. Those individuals believing that the idea of ethics is of little importance in their scientific age are the intellectual elite, and this group includes one of our protagonists, Mr. Studdock. In contrast to this group, there are a small number of citizens who have gathered around one man, a kind of spiritual leader, to await instructions from celestial beings regarding how to stop the degradation of England's land and people. Among this group is Mrs. Studdock. The story told in this novel explores many other themes, and follows Mr. and Mrs. Studdock through separate personal transformations that lead to a complete transformation of their marriage relationship.

Jane and Mark Studdock are introduced to the reader as two people who misunderstand each other a great deal, yet their lives are forever intertwined by the vow of marriage. The minds and spirits of Jane and Mark Studdock could not be traveling in more opposite directions at the opening of this novel. Jane is housewife who feels pangs of loneliness and regret, and Mark is a man who is primarily concerned with belonging to groups that he holds in high esteem. The feelings of these two characters lay the foundation for some of the struggles that take place through the course of this novel.

Mark is first known to the reader as a fellow at a college in the town where he and his wife live, Bracton College. He is a member of a more exclusive group within the fellowship called the Progressive Element. When Mark is invited to join a group of researchers at an institute in another city called the National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments (the N.I.C.E.), he happily accepts. Because of his feelings of inadequacy and his longing to belong, he is duped into thinking that the N.I.C.E. wants him to work for them because of his professional qualifications. He soon becomes frustrated because the specifications of his job are ever elusive. Mark does not discover this secret, but the reason for his lack of real work is that the individuals who run the N.I.C.E. are only using him to get to his wife. This is because the N.I.C.E. has found out that Jane has clairvoyant dreams, letting her see things in the present that need to remain confidential within the N.I.C.E. They fear that if she forms an alliance with an opposing group, she could be useful in the demise of the N.I.C.E.

Mark's time at the N.I.C.E. facility is marked by his admittance into a succession of groups that become more and more exclusive. His invitation to the N.I.C.E. is a kind of exclusive distinction from his fellows at Belbury college, and within the Progressive Element there. After spending some time in the N.I.C.E., Mark is invited to join a group of people who meet in the library to discuss the business at hand regarding N.I.C.E. public relations. This group, made up of six or seven other people, hands Mark the task

of writing press releases that spin the news in order to aid the N.I.C.E.'s cause. Mark gradually comes to learn that the people within this group are manipulating and using him, and that when his utility is at its end, they will kill him. He tries to escape the grounds of the N.I.C.E., but by this time the Deputy Director of the organization has ordered him to remain there and send for his wife immediately. After his foiled escape attempt yet another group invites Mark into its order as the time draws near for the completion of the N.I.C.E.'s project. This group, even smaller than the last, is the one that explains to Mark the full scope of the plan being carried out by the N.I.C.E.

Mark learns, earlier in the story, from the group that meets in the library, that the N.I.C.E. is concerned with doing away with nature. They view organic matter as dirty and unnecessary, and they wish to get rid of as much of it as possible. They include in this scope both the outdoors, and the human body. They have devised a scientific way to keep a human head alive without its body. They name this the true resurrection, and they call for an end of the natural man. However, the innermost group to which Mark is invited explains that they have been in contact with beings that are far greater than humans, which they call macrobes. These macrobes are heading up a plan to get rid of most of the human race, as well as most of the human body. Each person will need only exist as a head, and only the chosen elite will survive. This is the plan that will prevail, if no one stops it.

Jane Studdock, while Mark has been gone visiting the N.I.C.E. facilities, has been plagued by vivid dreams that seem to have eerie connections to real life. What is actually happening, although Jane is slow to admit it, is that she receives visions of the present as it relates to the plan being carried out by the N.I.C.E. Through some friends in the town in which she lives, Mr. and Mrs. Dimble, Jane is invited into an inner circle of her own. The people in this group all live at a place called St. Anne's, and they all follow a man whom one might call their spiritual leader, though the group at St. Anne's is egalitarian by design. This leader, known by several names, is one of the few characters carried over from the first two books in this trilogy. His name is Dr. Ransom, and he has traveled to both Mars and Venus in other stories. He is in communication with heavenly beings which inhabit space and sometimes planets, and it is from these beings that he trusts to receive instructions on how to foil to N.I.C.E.'s plan.

Jane, because she is frightened by her vivid dreams, goes to live at St. Anne's and becomes one of the group working to end the reign of the N.I.C.E. It is her gift of vision that may finally help her group to gain the upper hand in this battle. Merlin, the character from the legend of King Arthur, has been sleeping in an underground chamber for centuries. Whichever group gets to him first will be able to use him to channel great power and fulfill its plan. Jane receives visions of Merlin's recent whereabouts and physical state. In the end, Merlin comes to St. Anne's of his own accord to help Dr. Ransom and the others break down the N.I.C.E.

Merlin is present when the heavenly beings, called eldila, descend into Ransom's room. These beings fill him with power, and he is then taken to the N.I.C.E. to infiltrate its ranks and corrupt its cause from the inside.

Merlin does just that. He disguises himself as a translator, and is welcomed in to help the people in the N.I.C.E. communicate with a man they think to be Merlin, but who is actually just a common beggar. Merlin causes a huge stir during a banquet in which many people are killed, and many of the prisoners of the N.I.C.E. escape. Mark, as well as others, finds his way to St. Anne's, but with a much-changed attitude about life.

Our story ends with the destruction of the N.I.C.E., and everyone who has been working to communicate with the evil celestial beings working toward the destruction of organic matter. Dr. Ransom awaits his ride into Deep Heaven as the members of the household at St. Anne's, human and animal alike, pair up with their mates. Love abounds at St. Anne's, and as the book closes, Mark and Jane, both much changed, are meeting each other for the first time since Mark left for the N.I.C.E., and they are very much in love with one another.

Sale of College Property

Sale of College Property Summary

The novel *That Hideous Strength* by C.S. Lewis carries on a plot that begins in the first book in this trilogy, *Out of the Silent Planet*, and continues through the second novel *Perelandra*. This story can, however, be read without first reading the other two books. This novel deals with the issue of science versus ethics, among others. It follows the main characters, Mr. and Mrs. Studdock, as they become supporters of opposites sides of this battle. Those individuals believing that the idea of ethics is of little importance in their scientific age are the intellectual elite, and this group includes one of our protagonists, Mr. Studdock. In contrast to this group, there are a small number of citizens who have gathered around one man, a kind of spiritual leader, to await instructions from celestial beings regarding how to stop the degradation of England's land and people. Among this group is Mrs. Studdock. The story told in this novel explores many other themes, and follows Mr. and Mrs. Studdock through separate personal transformations that lead to a complete transformation of their marriage relationship.

Jane and Mark Studdock are a newly married couple who live in post-war England in a town called Edgestow. Jane is consumed with feelings of loneliness, neglect and loss of her identity within the marriage. Mark, however, is unaware of his wife's distress, and his primary concern is with his fellowship at the local college, called Bracton. Mark has recently been invited to join a movement within the fellows at Bracton called the Progressive Element, and his thoughts are joyful because he longs to belong to almost any exclusive society. Mark chats with another member of the Progressive Element, Mr. Curry (the sub-warden), while on his way to a meeting of the fellows at Bracton College.

During his conversation with Curry, Mark learns that the meeting at Bracton will probably last long into the night, as there are many matters to discuss, and because the group of fellows contains several members who will obstruct the progress of the meeting if they do not agree with one of the decisions being made. Mark also learns that he will get a chance to meet a supporter of his, a man who has been away from Bracton for quite some time, Lord Feverstone. Mark learns that this man, Lord Feverstone, is primarily responsible for his own fellowship at Bracton College, as he was running against another candidate, Denniston. Besides learning these things, Mark speaks to Curry about a decision that will be brought to vote that very night. Mark and Curry are supporters of a move to sell part of the college property, Bragdon Wood, to a national agency called the National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments (the N.I.C.E.).

This agency exists to make advances in science, without being held back by "red tape." It operates with little or no restraints in regard to paperwork, money matters, and, it turns out, ethics. The N.I.C.E. intends to buy the property at Bracton College in order to build a huge facility in which they will employ many people, all working toward bettering the world through advances in the field of science. The draw for the fellows at Bracton is



that they hope their college will become an academic hub, and they wish to bring jobs to Edgestow. One other important reason for the fellows at Bracton to want the N.I.C.E. to purchase their land is that the college is low on funds, and cannot even spare the money to re-fence the piece of property being sold. However, there are those individuals in the fellowship who disagree with selling this particular property.

This piece of property, Bragdon Wood, is at the center of Bracton and at its center is a deep well. This has historically been known as Merlin's well. During Queen Elizabeth's reign, a man surrounded this wood with a wall in order to dispel myths and ceremonies centering on this well. The college was likely founded here because of this well, and the wood itself has acquired mysterious and dark connotations. Because of the history of this wood, some of the fellows do not like the idea of selling it, but at the end of the meeting the motion to sell the wood passes, with a little help from the mysterious Lord Feverstone.

In the mean time, Jane Studdock has been alone tidying the home she shares with Mark. She has been having vivid and frightening dreams, and is reminded of her last one when she picks up the newspaper. In her dream she saw the face of a foreign man who looked shocked and terrified, as if waiting for something awful to happen to him. He began having a conversation with someone in French, and then suddenly the visitor took hold of the foreigner's head and twisted it off. Just then, the head changed from that of a foreign man to that of a very old man with a flowing white beard. Some people were trying to dig this man up from a churchyard. Jane wakes because she tries to stop them; she tries to tell them the man is alive. Upon looking at the newspaper, Jane realizes that the initial face in her dream is that of a prisoner who was recently executed for the murder of his wife.

In order to calm her nerves, and because she is alone and her house is already tidy, Jane goes out to shop. Upon leaving a hat shop, Jane runs into an old acquaintance, Mrs. Dimble. She invites Jane to join her and her husband for lunch at their home. Jane accepts, and is whisked away to the Dimble's home, which is at the edge of Bragdon Wood, where she learns that Mark's college group has voted to sell the wood, and this action will force the Dimbles to relocate. Also during lunch, Jane tells the Dimbles about her being very lonely, and about her horrible dream. She learns from the Dimbles that Bragdon Wood is not fit to build on, which raises a question about why the N.I.C.E. wishes to purchase it. At that very moment, Mr. Dimble hears a pupil of his calling, and is forced to excuse himself, but not before telling Jane to let him know if she thinks of telling anyone else of her strange dream.

Sale of College Property Analysis

In this first chapter the reader is introduced to several important characters. Mr. and Mrs. Studdock are the two main characters, and this chapter gives details about the tension in their marriage, which is only six months old. It is clear that Jane is unhappy in her current role as wife, and regrets giving up single life. It is just as clear that Mark battles feelings of inadequacy and his need to belong, and these feelings distract him

from working on the marriage. The reader also meets the Dimbles, who are to play a major part in the rest of the story, and also learns of the N.I.C.E., which at this point seems to be a positive institution.

Lewis alludes to inconsistencies within the N.I.C.E. in this chapter however, when the Dimbles tell Jane that Bragdon Wood is unfit to build anything on. If the ground cannot support a building, why does the N.I.C.E. want the wood? The reader gets the idea that Jane's dream is more than just nonsense when the Dimbles ask her to tell them before she speaks of it to anyone else. This event is the first sign that Jane has a gift, and that her dreams are useful and powerful. The presence of the dislocated head in her dream foreshadows the real plan that the N.I.C.E. is working on.

This chapter also hints at the idea that England is made up of a dichotomy of forces. These forces are either good or evil, and later in the book these are known as Logres and Britain respectively. This foreshadowing occurs when Mr. Dimble is speaking about the Arthurian legends written by Malory. He says that the characters in those stories are made up of two groups, one on either side of Arthur. Within this conversation, Mr. Dimble also hints at a reason why Merlin might be important later in the story. He is on neither side, or he is part of both. Therefore, he is outside the dichotomy.

Dinner with the Sub-Warden

Dinner with the Sub-Warden Summary

After the meeting and vote held by the fellows at Bracton College, four of the participants retreat into two of the best rooms at the college to dine together. Present are Mr. Curry, Lord Feverstone, James Busby (the college bursar) and Mark Studdock. Busby has arranged this dinner party, during which the conversation quickly turns to the N.I.C.E. Lord Feverstone raises the question as to whether anyone really knows what the institute is, or what it plans to do. Busby and Curry spout all sorts of answers to this question, but these answers are vague, except for their belief that it will create well-paying jobs.

Soon Curry is called away to a meeting with the Warden of Bracton, and Busby announces that he plans to go to bed early. These actions leave Mark alone with Lord Feverstone, which is exactly what Feverstone wanted in the beginning. Almost immediately Feverstone begins to make fun of Curry and Busby for what they said about the N.I.C.E. He lets Mark know that they are only being used as a means to an end, and that he regards them as rather stupid. They have been persuaded to fight to bring the N.I.C.E. to Edgestow, and they are carrying out this task as if it were their own idea.

After revealing this part of the plan to Mark, Feverstone begins to divulge more. The true plan within the N.I.C.E., as Feverstone tells Mark, is to use science in the remaking of the human race. It is the position of this institute, and Lord Feverstone, that man can be made into a much more efficient animal. There are only three problems standing in the way of this work. First, Lord Feverstone says that there is an interplanetary problem, but he quickly says that this problem must be set aside because nothing can be done about it. When explaining this problem, Feverstone tells Mark that the only man who could help has been murdered. This is an allusion to the story that takes place in the second book in this trilogy, *Perelandra*. Feverstone uses the story of this murder to emphasize the importance of Mark choosing the right side, although Mark is at this time only vaguely aware of the battle. The second problem is "earthly rivals," meaning all organic life, both flora and fauna. Anything that makes the planet dirty is an obstacle to the cause of making man a more efficient creature. Thirdly, the N.I.C.E. must contend with man himself. Feverstone explains that some men must rise up and take control of the rest of humanity. Some of the plans to overcome the problem of mankind include sterilizing the unfit, selective breeding and genocide. Strangely, Mark seems to take offence at none of these prospects.

Mark's council with Feverstone ends with an offer. Feverstone offers to take Mark to visit the N.I.C.E.'s temporary facility in Belbury. While there, Mark will get to meet the Deputy Director of the institute, Mr. Withers. It becomes more clear to Mark that Feverstone is offering him a position with the N.I.C.E., but Mark cannot figure out what his job would require him to do. Mark is a sociologist, but it appears from his conversation with



Feverstone that they are interested in his writing. Mark does not want his primary job to be writing, but he is so taken in by Lord Feverstone and the chance to be a part of another exclusive group that he relents and agrees to visit. During this conversation Mark also finds out that the man he thought of as the leader of the N.I.C.E. is nothing more than a figurehead used for publicity. The conversation ends when Curry comes back from his meeting.

When Mark returns home late that same night, he is greeted by a distraught and crying Jane. She has been home from the Dimbles' house for hours now, and in the meantime she has been thinking of her strange dream. By letting her mind dwell on the events of this dream, Jane has become panicked. To calm herself, she phones Mrs. Dimble, and is advised to seek the council of a Mrs. Ironwood residing at St. Anne's on the Hill. This advice makes her feel worse, and she sits huddled in the house until Mark comes home. She is humbled by her experience, and this is a new position for her in her relationship with Mark, however, his only thoughts are selfish ones because he is tired and a bit drunk.

Jane and Mark wake together the next morning, and whatever drew Jane to Mark the night before is gone. She is cold toward him, and all the while he is admiring her looks. Mark tells Jane of the trip he has planned to visit Belbury, and of his prospective job. After the two dress and start their day, each receives a visitor. Jane is called on by Mrs. Maggs who is her housekeeper. It is obvious because of their interaction that Jane regards Mrs. Maggs as someone of a lower class than herself. Lord Feverstone shows up to fetch Mark for their trip to Belbury. Upon meeting Feverstone, Jane distrusts him immediately.

While Mark is in the car with Feverstone heading to Belbury, Jane goes out shopping. She reasons that Mark will probably be gone for a few days, and nights, and she does not like the prospect of being alone for that long. She resolves to go see Mrs. Ironwood, but she thinks herself a fool for doing so.

Mark's car ride with Feverstone is exciting because the Lord is a bit of a daredevil when it comes to driving. Mark is further taken in by him and very impressed. Mark arrives at Belbury, which is an "Edwardian mansion" built after Versailles, then added onto to make room for a Blood Transfusion Office. It is into this office that the N.I.C.E. has moved its temporary headquarters. In the meantime, Jane travels to St. Anne's to meet Mrs. Ironwood.

Dinner with the Sub-Warden Analysis

In this chapter the reader gets the first glimpse of a dark side to Lord Feverstone and the whole N.I.C.E. It becomes obvious, through Lord Feverstone's conversation with Mark, that this institution does not hold humanity in high regard. A bit of the N.I.C.E.'s real plan is revealed to the reader, it is clear that the goal is to control nature and mankind/human nature. This agency appears to be comfortable with using any means necessary to bring about the desired end. Ethics is not considered in this scheme.

In this chapter the reader also gets a closer look at the marriage relationship between Jane and Mark. Mark thinks mostly of himself, and Jane follows suit. They seem to be two people existing independently of one another, yet chained together by their decision to get married. Jane warms up to Mark when she is frightened, but only for the moment, because she is cold to him the next morning. Mark, that same morning, gazes at Jane's body without admiring her spirit and personality.

During his first conversation with Mark, Feverstone alludes to the murder of "the only man who could help." This man is called by name, Weston, in this conversation. This refers to the second book in this trilogy called *Perlandra*. The main character in that novel is named Dr. Ransom, and Weston is his evil nemesis. Ransom kills Weston in the previous novel, and will appear in this one. This statement made by Lord Feverstone lets the reader know that he is a sympathizer with Weston.

The theme of Mark wishing to belong continues in this chapter. This theme is evident in the way that Mark is so easily taken in by the prospect of belonging to the N.I.C.E. even though some of the ideas Lord Feverstone presents are horrid. Mark is a part of the fellows at Bracton, and within that order he is a member of the Progressive Element. He is now seeking to become part of a more exclusive order by joining the N.I.C.E.

Belbury and St. Anne's-on-the-Hill

Belbury and St. Anne's-on-the-Hill Summary

Mark's entrance into Belbury is marked by his awareness of the sharp contrast between the appearance of himself and that of Lord Feverstone. When each of the men pass a mirror, Mark notes to himself that Feverstone looks like a "master of his clothes," while Mark himself is plagued by a blob of cotton on his face because of a shaving accident. It is with this scene in his mind that Mark is introduced to Mr. John Wither, the Deputy Director of the N.I.C.E.

Mark's initial impression of Wither is that he is polite, but he seems to be distracted from their conversation. His eyes seem far away and unfocused. During their conversation Mark tries in vain to figure out exactly what his position at the N.I.C.E. will entail. Wither constantly avoids his questions, stating that elasticity of the duties to be carried out is key, so nailing down a job description is useless. What the Deputy Director is looking for in Mark is flexibility. However, he assures Mark that his needs will be taken care of, and that he will be very comfortable with his compensation.

After his conversation with Wither, Lord Feverstone leads Mark into a hall where other members of the N.I.C.E. are conversing. Mark is offered membership into the Institute, and he finds that the best way to join is by lifetime membership, with a fee of 200 pounds. Mark knows he does not have that much money in the bank, and offers the absence of his checkbook as an excuse to avoid paying this fee. At this time, Lord Feverstone greets another colleague and leaves Mark standing alone in the hall.

Mark debates with himself what the next agreeable action is, because he feels like a guest, yet his host, Lord Feverstone, has abandoned him. After some time of just standing in an empty hall, Mark makes his way through a set of doors, following his nose to food. Mark finds in this new room a long table at which many members of the N.I.C.E. are seated preparing for lunch. Mark chooses a seat beside a stranger, and makes his way through lunch feeling awkward because he is not sure that he is a member yet.

The lunch party moves across the hall to have coffee, and it is now that Mark spots a fellow Bractonian and member of the Progressive Element, William Hingest. Hingest tells Mark that the vote over Bragdon Wood was all a show, and that the N.I.C.E. would have had it anyway. He alludes to the terrible plans of the N.I.C.E., and tells Mark that he has had enough. He advises Mark to go back to Bracton and continue with his career there. He tells Mark that he is leaving that very night, but if Mark decides to stay he will introduce him to the head of the sociology department, Mr. Steele. This is because Mark's specialty is sociology. However, when Mark is introduced to him, Steele takes a hostile attitude about working with Mark. Steele shows contempt for Lord Feverstone because he assumes that Feverstone has dumped Mark into his department without first consulting him. This is, however, a misunderstanding because

Mark has been brought to the N.I.C.E. to do jobs that do not fall within the authority of the sociology department.

While this disagreeable conversation is taking place, another man introduces himself to Mark. This man is Professor Filostrato, and Mark recognizes him at once. This man is well known as a physiologist, and Mark had dined with him some years ago. Filostrato tells Mark that the business of the N.I.C.E. is very serious. In fact, the existence and perpetuance of the human race depends on it. Filostrato also tells Mark that within the N.I.C.E. there is an inside group, and an outside group. Mark should not worry about people like Steele because the real work of the N.I.C.E. does not concern him. Filostrato tells Mark that he can be in control of such people if he abides within the good graces of the Deputy Director. Filostrato begins to warn Mark that he should not make enemies of a woman called the Fairy. Just then, Filostrato spots her and introduces her to Mark.

The Fairy, also known as Miss Hardcastle, is the leader of the institutional police. While conversing with her Mark gets a welcomed feeling that he is part of a group instead of an outsider. He is drawn in to her stories about what an exciting life she has led. The Fairy explains to Mark the plan for the "remedial treatment" of criminals. Although she does not go into detail about how criminals will be treated, she does let Mark know that eventually this treatment will extend, by calling it "prevention," to every citizen. The police will be able to have control over each citizen, and alter him or her by any means they like. The Fairy closes this conversation by telling Mark to be careful of Mr. Wither and a man named Mr. Frost. She tells Mark to avoid getting on Wither's bad side by trying to pin down exactly what his job is.

Later that night, at dinner, Mark sits beside Hingest, and he is warned one more time to go back to Bracton and finish his work there. Mark, however, seemingly does not care about Hingest's warnings, and even after Hingest offers to take Mark back to Edgestow with him, Mark chooses to stay at Belbury.

Meanwhile, Jane has gone to St. Anne's on the Hill to visit with Miss Ironwood, as instructed by the Dimbles. She is not permitted entrance into the house until she tells the girl who greets her that she was sent by Dr. Dimble. She is then brought into a room to wait until Camilla Denniston goes to fetch Miss Ironwood. This woman, Mrs. Denniston, is the wife of the man who was up for the fellowship at Bracton against Mark, but Jane is not aware of this fact.

When Jane is brought before Miss Ironwood, she begins to tell her about her horrible dreams. It becomes clear that Jane has come to see this woman for a cure, in order to stop the dreams. Miss Ironwood informs Jane that there is no cure for the dreams because they are not a disease but a gift. It seems that Jane's ancestor had the same gift, and wrote a short book about it. Jane makes it clear that she does not fully believe that her dreams allude to real events. She wants the dreams to stop because they are impeding her happiness. Miss Ironwood takes time to explain that Jane's dreams are a part of something that is more important than the happiness of one individual. Jane is made to understand that there is a struggle between two sides going on, and she is

advised to join the group at St. Anne's. Just then, Jane is overtaken by feelings of resentment and vanity. She decides that she wants nothing to do with this group and leaves.

On the way home Jane thinks of her feelings regarding getting involved in things. She thinks it wise to avoid entanglements, and reflects on this as a reason why she has so far avoided trying to have children. On returning home, Jane hears the telephone ringing and Mrs. Dimble on the other end sounding very distraught. The chapter ends with Mrs. Dimble on her way to Jane's house to spend the night.

Belbury and St. Anne's-on-the-Hill Analysis

In this chapter, the reader finds further characterization of the Studdocks, as well as of the N.I.C.E. as an institution. One finds Mark still wrapped up in worrying about his belonging to a group. His wavering sense of self allows him to remain among people who propose to do things that he should find horrid. Mark is not a bad person, and this fact becomes clearer later in the book. He is simply taken in with earning membership in groups.

Jane again confronts her cold feelings regarding her marriage. She wishes to avoid becoming entangled with the group at St. Anne's, and while thinking about this considers all she had to give up in order to become a wife. She regards motherhood as an invasion of herself. She deals with issues of pride, resentment and vanity. The Jane that is presented at this stage is short sighted and closed off.

Also in this chapter, we see the N.I.C.E. getting conflicting reviews from different characters. It becomes obvious the battle will involve the N.I.C.E. and the people living at St. Anne's. The reader observes Mr. Hingest speaking out against the N.I.C.E. to Mark, and within minutes of this conversation, the Fairy and Professor Filostrato telling Mark how important their work is. By reading the Fairy's conversation with Mark, the reader gets a glimpse of the dark side of the N.I.C.E. The Fairy tells Mark that he should not "believe everything (he) hear(s)." This statement provides the reader with a clue that things are not how they seem at the institute. In fact this is very true. Mark ends up being told of several aims of the N.I.C.E. before being told the true task.

In this chapter the reader gets a first hint, from the Fairy, that the N.I.C.E. controls the newspapers. She alludes to the fact that they only lack control of two papers, and they use the ones they do control to sway public opinion on certain issues, specifically regarding the "treatment" of criminals.

The Liquidation of Anachronisms

The Liquidation of Anachronisms Summary

Mrs. Dimble comes over to see Jane late in the night. She explains to Jane why she finds herself in need of a place to sleep, having sent Mr. Dimble to sleep at the college. It seems that sometime earlier that day the Dimbles go home to find a wrecking crew from the N.I.C.E. is tearing up their yard because they live on the edge of Bragdon Wood. They tell the Dimbles that they will not be able to stay at home anymore, which brings Mrs. Dimble to Jane's house.

After this explanation, Mrs. Dimble asks Jane about her recent visit to St. Anne's to see Miss Ironwood. However, Jane makes it clear that she would rather not talk about her trip, and the two women go to bed. In the night Jane has another of her vivid dreams. In this dream, Jane sees a man riding along in a car, stopping in a clearing, and getting badly beaten by several people. In the end, the man is killed. Jane's screams during this dream wake Mrs. Dimble, and they have a short chat before going back to bed.

In the morning Jane and Mrs. Dimble go about doing the chores, and this activity cheers Jane because she feels less lonely. Mrs. Dimble asks again about Jane's trip to see Miss Ironwood, and Jane informs her friend that she does not plan to go back to St. Anne's. In fact, Jane is of the opinion that by visiting Miss Ironwood she has dealt with the problem, and she expects to have fewer disturbing dreams. During this conversation Mrs. Dimble informs Jane that her housekeeper, Mrs. Maggs is not longer to be expected. This is because Mrs. Maggs too had a home near the edge of Bragdon Wood and, in turn, has been forced to evacuate. Upon hearing this news, Jane is strangely preoccupied with finding someone else to fill this position.

Mrs. Dimble goes to town to meet up with her husband, and Jane comes along with her. After the two women part ways, Jane runs into one of Mark's colleagues, Mr. Curry. She does not think of chatting with Curry for very long, but he begins to tell her a story which makes her feel very sick. Curry tells Jane that another of his and Mark's colleagues, Mr. Hingest, has been found murdered, seemingly beaten to death. Jane is greatly disturbed because of the connections between her dream and this very real event.

Meanwhile, Mark is still at Belburry, and while waiting for the committee to meet, talks with a man named Reverend Straik. During this strange conversation Rev. Straik comes across as a bit crazy. While talking with Mark he mentions Jesus' teachings, and Mark blushes at the mention of this name. Straik lets Mark know that once you join the N.I.C.E. and begin helping in its work, there is no turning back.

During the committee meeting Mark takes note that the real work of the N.I.C.E. must take place elsewhere because the topics being discussed during this meeting are not of great importance. There is an announcement during the meeting about the death of William Hingest. When the details are stated, they are eerily similar to those in Jane's



dream, of which Mark is unaware. Mr. Wither, while telling the story, does state that the only joy from the situation is that the N.I.C.E. police, headed by the Fairy, were on the scene almost immediately, and the local police are not opposed to their involvement.

After the meeting is adjourned, a member of the N.I.C.E. named Mr. Cosser invites Mark to join him in doing some work in a town called Cure Hardy. The N.I.C.E. plans to redirect a river, the Wynd, from the town of Edgestow through the town of Cure Hardy. Cosser takes Mark to Cure Hardy in order to write a report about this river redirection. While the two men are in this town, Mark speaks of his appreciation for the countryside and the people. Cosser is in sharp contrast with Mark on these issues. He does not find any beauty or joy in either of these things.

After their research outing to Cure Hardy, Cosser drops Mark off in Edgestow so that he can visit Jane. On his way to see her, Mark thinks of how he will present the story of what he has been doing at Belbury. When the two are together, Jane thinks of whether she will tell Mark of her dreams or her visit to St. Anne's. The couple spends time together, but each is mostly thinking of him or her self.

While Mark and Jane interact, a meeting is happening at Belbury College, where Lord Feverstone informs the fellows that Mark will not be coming back. This message is strange because Mark has not officially accepted a position at the N.I.C.E., and therefore, has not resigned from the fellowship at Bracton. While the meeting goes on, a great commotion goes on outside. The fellows think they hear people with machine guns. Bragdon Wood is being razed.

The Liquidation of Anachronisms Analysis

In this chapter the reader observes further characterization of Jane and Mark, as well as their relationship. One sees Mark thinking positively of the people and landscape at Cure Hardy. He is presented in sharp contrast to Cosser, a typical member of the N.I.C.E. Therefore; in this chapter one sees a glimpse of Mark parting ways with the doctrines of this institute. It seems that when he is physically away from Belbury he begins to think somewhat clearly again.

The reader also observes Jane and Mark hiding things from one another. Mark does not want to disclose all the details of his stay at Belbury, and Jane does not want to bother Mark about her dreams and her visit to St. Anne's. The author tells the reader that each of them is longing to be admired. They are more concerned with themselves than one another, and this furthers the theme of selfishness that is present throughout the book.

There are also several Biblical allusions in this chapter. One finds the Rev. Straik talking of Jesus and his teachings, and he makes a direct reference to Luke 9:62 when he says, "there is no turning back once you have set your hand to the plough," (p 80, 1965 Macmillan Paperback Edition). These references point the reader to another theme, that of the fight between good and evil. This is not to say that Rev. Straik is on the "good" side, but his use of this type of language brings the theme to light.

Elasticity

Elasticity Summary

The next morning, Mark goes back to Belbury by train, and almost immediately he mentions the report he is working on with Cosser to Mr. Steele. Mr. Steele is the head of Cosser's department, and presumably Mark is to be a member of this department as well. It soon becomes clear to Mark that Steele knew nothing of this report, and is angry at the prospect of the two working on this without his knowledge.

Because of this negative interaction with Mr. Steele, Mark decides to go to the Deputy Director, Mr. Wither, and nail down exactly what his job is to be. He goes to Wither's office, barges in and finds him in the middle of a meeting with someone else. As a result of this, Mark is forced to make an appointment with Wither's secretary for the following day.

While leaving the secretary's office, Mark runs into the Fairy, and he tells her of his plan to either find out what his job is or to leave the N.I.C.E. She reminds him that if he stays in the good graces of Wither he can simply ignore anyone, such as Steele, who may give him a hard time. She tells him that he should not bother Wither with specifics about his job, but that she can give him part of his job right now.

The Fairy tells Mark that a prisoner, Alcasan, has been chosen to be rehabilitated instead of killed by the guillotine. Mark is to write a series of press releases regarding this rehabilitation, making the public feel more comfortable with it. His job is to write propaganda for newspapers. Mark is upset at this prospect because he regards himself as a scientist, not a journalist. The conversation ends with Mark considering the job, and the Fairy telling Mark that if he decides to leave the N.I.C.E. he had better keep his mouth shut.

The next day Mark proceeds with his meeting with the Deputy Director, Wither, and begins by telling him that he must leave the institute. By several twists of logic, Wither manipulates Mark into wanting to stay in order to be part of the group. He tells Mark that his position is secure, and his salary is to be a comfortable one. Mark relents to the job, partly because he does not want to go home and tell Jane that the whole prospect of a higher paying job is gone.

After his meeting with Wither, Mark goes downstairs and finds a letter addressed to him from Mr. Curry and the fellows at Bracton. The letter sates their sorrow at learning from Lord Feverstone that Mark is resigning his chair at Bracton. Mark is upset at this news because he has still not accepted his position at the N.I.C.E., and he wishes to be able to fall back on his post at Bracton if he decides against it. He writes Curry a letter in which he refutes the idea that he is leaving the fellowship, and cites Jane's nervous condition as a reason to return to Edgestow and Bracton.

Mark passes the rest of the day uneventfully, that is, until teatime. This is when Mark spots Lord Feverstone, and asks him to explain exactly what he is supposed to be doing at the N.I.C.E. He also tells Feverstone that he has not resigned at Bracton, and he wants to be restored to his position there while he decides about the N.I.C.E. The conversation ends with the understanding that if Mark declines the position at the N.I.C.E., he is also losing his fellowship at Bracton. These two entities are intertwined.

In the meantime Jane is occupying herself out of the house by shopping and occasionally looking for someone to replace Mrs. Maggs. While she is out, she runs into Mr. and Mrs. Denniston, from St. Anne's. They invite her out to a picnic lunch, and, while eating, they tell her more about their group. Jane learns that the man who leads the group is known as Mr. Fisher-King. He remains somewhat mysterious to her, but Jane does learn that he has previously been told that a group will form around him, and this group will include someone with a gift of vision. The Dennistons are quite sure that this person is Jane. When the lunch draws to a close, Jane tells the Dennistons she will not join their group, but she will inform them of any more dreams she has, and promises to keep quiet about the whole business.

Elasticity Analysis

In this chapter, the reader observes the continuation of Mark's need to feel that he belongs. He has made up his mind to leave the N.I.C.E., but because Wither makes him feel like he is a part of a group, he agrees to stay. One can also observe Jane rebelling against anything that hints at taking away her independence. When she is speaking to the Dennistons, Jane hears one of them say, "please, give yourself to us." This phrase, coupled with some of their analogies about joining the group, makes Jane feel rebellious and obstinate. The reader can see, from these characterizations, that the personalities of both Jane and Mark are still very much alike when the story begins. They have not yet begun to change.

C.S. Lewis uses this chapter to further the reader's understanding that there are jobs that go on inside the N.I.C.E. for no reason at all, and there are certain ceremonies and meetings that take place as a decoy for the real work of the organization. We can see this in the reaction that gets regarding the report he is going to write about the town of Cure Hardy. The N.I.C.E. is being characterized more and more as a group built on secrets and lies.

Fog

Fog Summary

Mark has finally decided for sure that he will take the position within the N.I.C.E., but upon informing the Deputy Director, Wither, about his decision, he is startled to find that Wither assumes he did not want it. The Deputy Director tells Mark he is no longer being offered admission under the original terms, but that he may be able to come on for a probationary period. Mark hastily accepts, because his fears of being left out have once again been manipulated.

After his meeting with the Deputy Director, the Fairy find Mark and gets him started on the job of writing press releases about the institutional police and the rehabilitation of the prisoner known as Alcasan. He works with the police captain to put facts from Alcasan's dossier into the articles. In this process, Mark is operating in a purely journalistic mode, which is what he never wanted to do. While working with the captain of the institutional police, Mark learns that he can ask for any amount of funds because the N.I.C.E. plans to take over the area of currency. He also learns that no one has ever left the N.I.C.E. except for Mr. Hingest, who was recently murdered.

Because Mark decides to stay and make himself useful to the N.I.C.E. he is admitted into another, more exclusive, society. This group meets in the library at Belbury between ten o'clock and midnight, and it consists of the Fairy, Professor Filostrato, Lord Feverstone and Reverend Straik. A man named Mr. Frost is also present, but remains silent most of the time. In addition to these, the Deputy Director is often there, in body only as he does not participate in the discussions. Mark finds Straik most annoying because he tends to speak in tangents about spiritual matters, mostly resurrection.

The day after Hingest's funeral, Mark ventures to go into the library without being escorted by one of the members. He receives a warm welcome, and this solidifies his feelings of belonging. Almost immediately he is given a job to write two lengthy press releases regarding a riot that the institutional police are going to orchestrate. Mark is surprised to find that the police are orchestrating the disturbances, but he falls into the propaganda work easily. Mark learns that the reason for choreographing these riots is that under "emergency regulations," which must be declared by the government, the N.I.C.E. will have less bureaucracy to deal with when carrying out some of their plans.

Mark sets about writing two articles that tell about the night's riot, and cast the N.I.C.E. police force in a positive, and even heroic, light. These articles speak of some organization engineering the riots, and propose turning the whole matter over to the institutional police so that they may find which group is doing these things. Of course, upon publication, the N.I.C.E.'s name is nowhere connected with the author of the articles.



While writing these articles, and afterward, Mark feels good about his handiwork. In fact, the longer he works on the articles, the more he likes what he has produced. The child inside him feels proud at being a part of something so secret and exclusive, so important.

Meanwhile, meetings have taken place at Bracton and Mr. Busby, the bursar, has been made to understand that Bracton College is to sell out to the N.I.C.E., and if they do not accept the generous offer being presented now they will be forced to relocate with nominal compensation. The workers have begun to redirect the Wynd river, and most places in Edgestow are torn up and broken.

Jane, during this time, has been having more dreams. She has a recurring one of a man sitting beside her bed taking notes on a clipboard. His description matches that of Mr. Frost from Belbury, but Jane is unaware of his connection to Mark. She also has a vivid dream, in which she becomes aware of dreaming, and thereby escapes the normal fright she gets. In this dream, she is in a small, dark place, and there is a man lying on a raised platform. He appears to be dead, but she can only use her sense of touch to explore the space because of the intense darkness. She feels a cold foot, then a long beard, and finally begins to feel a face. She then gets a sense of someone who is good coming into the place, but he never shows up. This is the end of the dream.

After waking and having breakfast, Jane goes to town to shop and look for a replacement housekeeper. Shortly after arriving in town, Jane sees a man getting into a car belonging to the N.I.C.E. who looks exactly like the man she has seen making notes on her in her dreams. She decides to go to St. Anne's immediately. She travels there by train, and notices a change in the weather as she approaches. The fog that has been over Edgestow is not present at St. Anne's.

Fog Analysis

In this chapter it becomes more clear just how much of the happenings are engineered by the N.I.C.E. The reader sees Mark get further wrapped up in the evil plan to control humanity as his longing to belong is exploited. Mark begins to, not only abide with people doing deplorable things, but also participate in these things by writing the newspaper articles that use propaganda to shape public opinion. Mark's childish pride helps him along as he begins to feel important for having such a job.

Jane sees in-the-flesh evidence that her dreams are real, and is driven to go to Saint Anne's, and this is a turning point for her character. She begins to long for people who are truly good. This is the first sign that Jane is beginning to feel comfortable relying on other people. She is giving up a little of her stubborn independence.

Rev. Straik is observed making more Biblical allusions. He speaks a lot about raising the dead, which foreshadows the fact that the real aim of the N.I.C.E. is to do just that. Straik makes the claim that God commanded people to, among other things, raise the dead, and this statement lends religious credibility to the mission of the N.I.C.E.



Near the end of the chapter, there are references to a dichotomy between people and places. Jane longs to be among good people, but it is also noted that she wants to be away from bad people. Upon leaving Edgestow, which has been covered in a thick fog, she notices that St. Anne's is experiencing far better weather. This can be seen as a metaphor because Edgestow has been taken over by the N.I.C.E., which is evil and dark, yet the weather at St. Anne's is clear and refreshing, as the N.I.C.E. has no hold over this place.

The Pendragon

The Pendragon Summary

Jane goes to the house at St. Anne's and is greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Denniston. She is shown in to the house, and to Miss Ironwood's room where the group tells her that the man she has been dreaming about with a clipboard in her bedroom is actually collecting information about her. She also learns that the leader of the group wants to see her, and that in this meeting she will be asked to make a final decision regarding joining their group.

Upon being shown into the leader's room, Jane is struck by the fact that he seems to be without age. He seems neither young, nor old. The man apologizes for not getting up to greet her, but his foot has been wounded. He tells Jane that she has already been of great help, and they had hoped that she could join them, but it seems that there is trouble because Mark is a member of the N.I.C.E. Jane, at hearing that his membership in this organization might bar her from St. Anne's, becomes desperate to join. She feels resentful, yet again, for Mark holding her back. The man tells her that she must first make sure it is alright with Mark for her to join them. At this Jane becomes unhappy because she feels that Mark never takes note of what she says.

While Jane deals with these kinds of feelings about Mark, the leader of St. Anne's tells her that his "masters" would not be happy with him accepting her into the group without her husband's consent. This sparks a conversation about whether Jane's marriage to Mark was a mistake. The man gives Jane some advice about submitting within the marriage relationship, and her feelings about Mark begin to change.

After this conversation, Jane goes home by train. At the Edgestow station there is much commotion. She tries to make it home by walking from the station, but the roads are blocked and there seems to be rioting. This is the riot that the N.I.C.E. has orchestrated. The institutional police are enforcing the street closings, but on finding a dimly lit street that might lead her home, Jane makes a run for it and is caught by them. The police that catch Jane bring her to a makeshift headquarters where she is faced with a tough looking woman. This turns out to be the Fairy, although Jane knows nothing of her. The Fairy takes no special interest in Jane until she hears her last name, and then she tries to find out where Jane was coming from that evening. Jane refuses to tell the woman where she was on her way from, and so she is tortured. The Fairy burns Jane with a cigarette, and she begins to take her, with the help of some other officers, to the N.I.C.E. by force. They carry her down several streets, but when the mob gets more out of control, they have to let her go in order to get back to their post.

After being abandoned in the street, in the middle of the angry mob, Jane finds a doorstep to sit in. Some kind people take her in, feed her and ask her if they might take her home in their car. She tells the couple that her home is at St. Anne's, and they take her there. She wakes up in bed at the house with Mrs. Maggs at her side.

The Pendragon Analysis

This is the first chapter that is devoted entirely to Jane's story. The author uses the title of this chapter to allude to the circumstances surrounding the man who is the leader of St. Anne's. The title of Pendragon is from the legend of King Arthur, Arthur's father being known as Uther Pendragon. In it Jane's character goes through some major changes. Upon meeting with the leader of the group at St. Anne's, sometimes known as The Pendragon, she becomes meeker. When he tells her that she may not be able to join the group without her husband's consent, she even gets desperate. Desperation is something that has not previously been in her character, or she would not show it. She begins to want to be a part of the group instead of doing everything on her own.

There is also a turning point in the way she thinks of Mark and her marriage. When talking with the leader at St. Anne's she realizes that she has not always treated Mark kindly. She begins to better understand her role as a wife. Her interaction with the leader is perhaps an analogy to the Christian conversion experience. C.S. Lewis, it is no secret, was a religious man; therefore it is not a surprise to find Christian ideas within his fiction writing. There are still parts of Jane that are not perfected, and the reader can observe these parts of Jane while she is on the train ride home. Jane is conflicted in her feelings about the leader at St. Anne's and about Mark. In the end, however, all her thoughts lead back to the leader, and from him they lead to joy.

The chapter ends with Jane calling St. Anne's home. This is significant because she has finally let go of her reservations about the group. She has seen the enemy, in the Fairy, and knows that she wants to be a part of the other side. This event also fits with the Christian conversion metaphor, because she has chosen to be a part of the group at St. Anne's. Given the choice between good and evil, she has chosen to be a part of the group that represents good.

Moonlight at Belbury

Moonlight at Belbury Summary

Back at the N.I.C.E. headquarters, the Fairy is busy talking with the Deputy Director, Wither, about her run-in with Jane Studdock. The director is telling the Fairy that she should not have tried to take Jane by force. He says that this method of bringing Jane to Belbury could disrupt her gift. In fact, Frost has already noted that Jane's mind is less accessible than when they began telepathically spying on her in her sleep. It is revealed during this conversation that the only reason that Mark was brought to Belbury and offered a position in the N.I.C.E. was to get to Jane. The conversation ends with someone called "the Head" summoning the Fairy. She goes to see this "Head" by walking down several passages, and the décor becomes more and more sterile. Finally Professor Filostrato greets the Fairy and gives her explicit instructions about how to act once inside the room with the Head. Apparently the Head is to be respected above all else.

Meanwhile, Jane wakes up at St. Anne's on the Hill after her long terrible night with the N.I.C.E. police. She is greeted by Mrs. Maggs, and told to wait until her bath is ready, and, in the meantime, drink some hot tea. While Mrs. Maggs is downstairs getting the tea, Jane decides that she can get the bath ready herself. However, when Jane opens the bathroom door, she is met by a huge bear. She runs screaming out into the hallway, and Mrs. Maggs meets her there and explains that the bear, Mr. Bultitude, is a part of the group at St. Anne's. The bear, like other creatures about the house, has had a conversation with the leader of the group. After this conversation, beasts and humans alike are forever changed, and the animals would never harm any human in the house.

After her bath, Jane is introduced to another member of the household, Mr. MacPhee. MacPhee is a long time friend of the leader of the group, and his personality is marked by objectivity. He tells Jane that he does not have opinions; he merely states facts and their consequences. It is during her conversation with MacPhee that Jane learns, from an interjection by Mrs. Dimble, that there are no servants in this house. The house is run on egalitarian terms with each gender taking alternating days to do the work. Jane learns that although Mrs. Maggs was her housekeeper, here at St. Anne's Mrs. Maggs is an equal. Everyone who lives there is a "charity" case it seems, and this category includes Jane.

During Jane's morning at St. Anne's, Mark has been at Belbury talking with Frost, the Fairy and Wither about that night's riots. It seems they went off exactly how they were supposed to. Mark learns nothing of his wife's capture and torture, but is in fact very proud of his work on the newspaper articles. During this conversation, Mark also learns that the government has handed over Edgestow to the N.I.C.E.'s police squad. Therefore, the N.I.C.E. has the power to appoint an emergency governor, and for this position they have chosen Lord Feverstone. Mark learns that the N.I.C.E. will appoint him because he is good at politics, but also because he can be sacrificed when the

people of Edgestow begin to hate the N.I.C.E. It seems that his usefulness has already peaked, and the N.I.C.E. is no longer in need of him.

At the close of this conversation, the Deputy Director takes Mark aside and tells him that normally the N.I.C.E. does not allow members' spouses to join them at Belbury, but for Mark they wish to make an exception. Wither asks Mark to write to his wife and have her come to stay. At the thought of Jane coming to Belbury, Mark begins to feel uneasy. In fact, he is determined to avoid asking her to come. This is because, at his core, Mark knows that Jane's mere presence would make all the conversations and laughter with the people in different groups sound hollow and fake. Jane would provide a contrast for Mark that might make him acknowledge that the people with whom he has been spending time are all evil. Mark does not answer Wither, but excuses himself hurriedly.

Later that evening, the topic of brining Jane to Belbury comes up again in a conversation with the Fairy. She tells Mark that he has put himself outside the graces of the Deputy Director again by snubbing his invitation for Jane. The Fairy tells Mark that Wither has never offered this gift to anyone else, and by refusing it, Mark has made the worst mistake possible. She tells Mark that Wither thinks he is not really "settled" at Belbury because he refused to bring Jane. The conversation ends with the Fairy encouraging Mark to bring Jane to Belbury in order to smooth things over with Wither.

Later, at dinner, Mark sits beside Professor Filostrato who is talking with a member of the N.I.C.E. not in the inner circle about why he chose to do away with most of the natural trees in the yard at Belbury. Filostrato says that "the forest tree is a weed" (p. 172, 1965 MacMillan Paperback Edition), and that he plans to replace these trees with aluminum trees that will be much more hygienic. There precedes a lengthy conversation regarding the disgusting nature of organic matter. He goes so far as to say that humanity is at a point where it is possible, and good, to make the brain live with less of its body. This state of being would be more hygienic. At the end of the dinner conversation, Filostrato tells Mark not to come to the Library tonight because he is out of the graces of Wither, and therefore out of the favour of the group.

Before Filostrato goes to the Library himself, he has Mark up to his room for a chat. He asks Mark why he does not want to bring his wife to Belbury. Mark says that he did not know it was so important to Wither, and Filostrato tells Mark that the offer came, not from Wither, but from the Head. Mark gets confused about who Filostrato is referring to as the Head. Filostrato begins telling Mark that the Head is no figurehead, and that he meant everything he said at the dinner about man learning to live with less body. In the end, Filostrato presents Mark with two options. First, he can decide to be truly one of the members of the inner circle by bringing Jane to Belbury, and this action will put the world at his feet, or second, Mark can decide to leave the institution and end up like Hingest.

Finally, Filostrato tells Mark that he will pay a visit to the Head shortly. He also tells Mark that the N.I.C.E. was created for reasons other than those previously stated. It was created to figure out how to give eternal life to the human brain. Those of the inner circle have already made great progress to this end. He tells Mark that the resurrection of

Jesus was a biblical symbol, but tonight he will see what it symbolized. He tells Mark that the Head is already considered by nature to be dead. Mark learns further that the Head is what remains of the prisoner Alcasan.

At that moment, Straik enters Filostrato's room and begins to tell Mark that he is being given the privilege to witness the making of God. Mark feels exhilarated and happy at the thought that he is still in the inner group enough to be shown to the Head. After this conversation, Mark is lead down a series of hallways, and told not to mention trivialities like bringing Jane to Belbury. He is not to argue with the Head. He is made to strip off his clothes, and put on some sterile ones along with gloves and masks. Mark is anticipating his meeting with the Head as he is led to the door.

Moonlight at Belbury Analysis

This is the chapter in which the reader finally discovers for sure that the N.I.C.E. is using Mark to get Jane in their clutches. Wither admits this to the Fairy early in the chapter, and the rest of it is marked by discussion about why Mark will not ask Jane to come to him. The manipulation of Mark, by using his need to belong, becomes ever more obvious as the chapter progresses.

Jane is shown learning the ways of the household at St. Anne's. She allows herself to become assimilated to their way of life. The old Jane, obstinate and proud, is almost done away with completely, and Jane wishes to stay at the house, especially after her terrible night with the Fairy.

There are many Biblical allusions within this chapter, and not all of them are delivered by the Reverend Straik. Filostrato alludes to man giving himself eternal life, through scientifically keeping the brain alive without the body. Straik speaks of man ruling the universe. They say that this version of man is the final man spoken of in the Christian Bible. There is also another allusion to Luke 9:62, by which Straik threatens Mark that there is no turning back now, unless he wants to be killed.

The Saracen's Head

The Saracen's Head Summary

Mark wakes the next morning with a terrible pain in his head. He remembers that in the night he had strange visions, and one of these stands out. He wants to believe that what he saw last night was a nightmare, but then he realizes that it really happened. He was lead in to see the Head, and it truly was just a head. This head, Alcasan's head, has no body. It is able to speak with the help of air and artificial saliva that are pumped in through tubes. After seeing this head, Mark passed out, and Straik and Filostrato must have put him to bed. Mark feels ashamed that he passed out, but his body is not as tough as he would like it to be. He is still a virtuous person, but his mind has banished his virtue to his body.

After rising, Mark decides that he must get Jane to Belbury, or else he will be killed. All his thoughts about the unpleasantness of her presence at Belbury are banished by the thought of imminent death. While at breakfast, Mark begins to write to Jane about coming to stay, but he is interrupted by the Fairy. She causes him to drop his pen, and he realizes at this moment that he regards her as rather a bully. He begins to feel hate and contempt for her.

The Fairy tells Mark that she is concerned about Jane because she has looked her up as a favor to Mark. She says that she found Jane in a degenerated condition. She speaks of Jane's possible induction into the mental asylum. She says that Jane spoke of a person breaking into the Studdocks' apartment and burning her with cigarettes. She says that Jane eventually began to blame the burn marks on the Fairy herself, but this is all nonsense. Mark makes to leave straight away, but the Fairy will not hear of it. She asks Mark to sign a document that allows her to go and get Jane herself. This way, Mark does not have to leave the premises.

Mark storms to the Deputy Director's office, gains his divided attention, and is told to go away. He then makes for the door, and starts down the drive. He is singular in his focus to get to Jane, but just when he makes it to a clearing in the woods outside the house he meets Mr. Wither. He thinks this is impossible, because he has just spoken with him in his office, but nevertheless, he returns to the house.

Meanwhile, Jane explains a dream that she has had to the leader of the group at St. Anne's. She describes seeing a head without a body, a head whose top has been removed and there seem to be brains bubbling out of it. The head sits on a pedestal, and seems to be in great pain. Then Jane sees three men walk into the room, one of whom she is sure is Mark. She sees the head address the three and Mark being introduced to it, and Mark passes out shortly after that. The leader comforts Jane that if they lose the battle, they will go down with Mark, but if they win they will surely rescue him. He then tells Jane that the housemates are to have a meeting tonight because things are getting very serious, but Jane is not to come to the meeting. The leader

explains that MacPhee worries that if Jane hears some of the talk in the meeting, she will carry this information over into her dreams. By doing this, Jane will negate the prophetic powers of her dreams. Jane is not offended at being left out.

After her talk with the leader, Jane is lead to MacPhee's study where he is to fill her in on the history of their little group. He begins by telling Jane that the leader was once known as Dr. Ransom. She recognizes a book that he wrote immediately. MacPhee tells Jane that Ransom has disappeared from society twice, and one of these times he came back saying that he had been kidnapped and taken to Mars. One of his kidnappers was Lord Feverstone, although under a different name. His second disappearance, when he visited Venus, was initiated by creatures that he calls eldils. These creatures, whom Ransom came in contact with on Mars, are inhabitants of the universe, but some of them stick to one planet or another. MacPhee explains that Ransom insists that he is visited by a group of eldils that are good. They have told him of a plot against humanity being carried out by some bad eldils. These bad eldils are using the N.I.C.E. to achieve their desired ends. As MacPhee is a man who prides himself in having no opinions, he only states what Ransom has said happened without giving any kind of judgment as to whether he believes his friend or not. Jane states immediately that she does believe Ransom.

At the end of the conversation, Mrs. Denniston comes to fetch Jane for a walk outside. They talk of MacPhee's loyalty to objectivity. They also talk about Ransom's age. Mrs. Denniston tells Jane that people who visit Venus (Perelandra) come back that way, they never get a day older because Paradise is there. Jane asks Mrs. Denniston if Ransom will die, and she replies that he will be taken back to "Deep Heaven."

That evening the housemates, minus Jane, meet to discuss the goings on in Jane's dream. They come to the conclusion that it is possible for a group of people to keep a human head alive without its body. MacPhee says that they probably have tried to increase its brain, and that is why there is substance bubbling out of the top of its skull. He goes on to say that the N.I.C.E. is taking all sorts of action to further their cause. Why does this group not take any action to counteract it? MacPhee says that if they are not going to do anything they should disband. Ransom tells the group that he has no authority to disband it as he did not bring it together. His masters, the eldils, did. Ransom ends the conversation by telling the group that this head is a new power at Belbury, but the N.I.C.E. is also after an old power connected with Bragdon Wood in Edgestow. If it acquires this old power, and combines it with the new one, then the group at St. Anne's has lost the battle.

The old power that the N.I.C.E. seeks is explained thus: Merlin, the character from Arthurian legend, sleeps under Bragdon Wood. Ransom had at first thought that the N.I.C.E. wanted the wood because of its inherent magical powers, but because Jane shared her dream of the man lying cold on the stone table, he now knows that they want Merlin himself. The eldils tell Ransom that Merlin has not been dead, but sleeping. He will wake under the right conditions, and his power is of an ancient kind. The eldils did not tell Ransom sooner because they did not know themselves of Merlin's presence.

They are not omniscient. If the evil eldils, through the actions of the N.I.C.E., win Merlin over to their side then all of Nature will be destroyed.

The Saracen's Head Analysis

This chapter is an important one for Mark because he begins to change his allegiance. His feelings about the Fairy change, and he regards her with hate and dread. He finally sees some of the people in the N.I.C.E. for who they really are. He finally decides to defy them and leave the grounds. A supernatural element is added to the character of Wither, as he is seen in his office and outside almost simultaneously.

Jane's character stands in sharp contrast to Mark's before he began to change. She is left out of a group discussion at the house at St. Anne's, and she does not react very much at all. In fact, she takes it rather well. Ransom's character is compared to Christ in this chapter when Mrs. Denniston tells Jane that he will not die, but be taken up into Deep Heaven. Jesus, after the resurrection, does not die, but ascends into heaven.

The author takes a break from the stories of Mark and Jane to inform the reader about how Bragdon Wood fits into the N.I.C.E.'s plan. This style is interesting because the explanation is not being given from one character to the other, but rather from the author directly to the reader. Within this explanation, the author makes a reference to a place written about in the stories by J.R.R. Tolkien, Numinor.

The Conquered City

The Conquered City Summary

Mark has trouble sleeping that night, and in the morning is called very early to see the Deputy Director. Wither, along with the Fairy, informs Mark that an investigation at the scene of Bill Hingest's murder turned up Mark's missing wallet. This finding implicates him in the murder of Mr. Hingest, but Wither and the Fairy tell Mark that they have not informed Scotland Yard of the finding. They tell Mark that he should be on his best behavior for the next few months, and if this happens maybe they can sweep this evidence under the rug. Mark insists that he is innocent, and the two accusers do not make any judgment calls regarding his guilt or innocence. They merely state the evidence. In the end Mark realizes that if he does not agree to keep his job, bring Jane to Belbury and continue on his best behavior he will be killed. He agrees to all these things, but on leaving the room he makes a break for the door. He heads down the same path he tried to use to leave the day before, but this time when he sees the personage of Wither standing in his way, he strikes it in the head. At this, the specter vanishes and Mark runs toward a town where he can get a train to Edgestow.

He makes it to the apartment he had shared with Jane, but finds that it has been empty for several days. He is upset and suspects that the Dimbles have something to do with Jane's disappearance. On his way to see Mr. Dimble at Bracton College, Mark stops at a home that has been converted into a N.I.C.E. bar. He finds satisfaction at being able to get in because he is still considered in the N.I.C.E. After a few stiff drinks, Mark calls on Mr. Dimble, and he is in his office seeing pupils at the college. Mark asks where Jane can be found, and when Mr. Dimble will not give him the address, Mark argues with him. Mark asks why he was not notified of his wife's mistreatment, and he tells Mr. Dimble that he will get to the bottom of it when he gets back to Belbury. They both know he has no power to ask questions of the institutional police. Finally, Mark tells Mr. Dimble he will leave the N.I.C.E. At this statement, Dimble hopes a little that Mark is serious, and he offers to help Mark leave. Dimble tells Mark to come with him immediately, but Mark wishes to think it over. Dimble tells Mark that he only wants to have time for his mind to become cloudy, but he is being offered a spot of the "right" side. Mark asks for an hour so that he may go out and get a drink. He wants to think it over for one hour, and then he will come back and deliver his decision to Mr. Dimble. However, upon leaving the college, Mark is stopped by a man asking his name. When Mark replies, the man arrests him for the murder of Bill Hingest.

Mr. Dimble, after waiting an hour, begins to drive home and thinks of how he could have navigated his conversation with Mark to better ends. He does not know that Mark has been picked up by the police, but he wishes he could have said something to make Mark come with him. Upon his arrival at the house at St. Anne's there is much commotion. He is ushered in and fed dinner while he is told of the recent happenings. Jane has had a dream, and in it she was back inside the room with the raised platform where the cold bearded man was lying. However, in this dream the man is gone. She

sees him at the end of a long tunnel moving stones, and then she is outside and sees a gate. Because of this news, Ransom tells Mr. Dimble that he and Jane must go looking for the man. Ransom tells him what he knows now about Merlin and that the reason he must go is because he knows the language of the eldils. The idea of God, called Maleldil here, is introduced. Mr. Dimble has already placed himself under the protection of Maleldil, and Jane is asked to do the same. She tells Ransom that she knows nothing of Maleldil, but she will place herself under Ransom's protection.

Before going out to search for Merlin, Mr. Dimble asks Ransom what he should say if they find him. Ransom tells Dimble to say he comes in the name of God and the one who sits in "the seat of the Pendragon." Ransom then asks Dimble to practice saying these words, and the language spoken is that of before the Biblical fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Jane finds it beautiful. Throughout the entire exchange MacPhee interjects that he should be the one going out to search for Merlin, but Ransom insists that this is impossible because he has not placed himself under the protection of Maleldil. Ransom regards Merlin as somewhat of an enemy, perhaps because he thinks that he may already be under the power of the evil eldils.

The Conquered City Analysis

The events in this chapter show that Mark has not completely let go of his old self. Although Mark does successfully leave the N.I.C.E., he still is taken in by being a part of that group. The theme of belonging carries on here, as Mark is pleased with being able to gain entrance into a N.I.C.E.-controlled pub. Even after he comes to terms with the fact that he is being used by them, he struggles with the decision to officially leave the N.I.C.E. and join the group at St. Anne's, perhaps because this group is not exclusive. This hesitation leads to Mark's demise, as while he is considering leaving the N.I.C.E., he is arrested.

During his conversation with Mark, Mr. Dimble struggles to be nice and fair to him. He admits that he has never really warmed to Mark, but inside he feels bad about this fact. At one point he begins to hope Mark will really leave the N.I.C.E., and the author makes an allusion here to a Bible verse: 1Corinthians 13:7.

There are many references to God, known in this story as Maleldil, in the conversation held at St. Anne's after Mr. Dimble drives home. Ransom tells people to put themselves under the protection of Maleldil. The language of the eldils, the "Great Tougue," is said to be the language spoken before the Biblical fall of man. When Jane says she cannot put herself under the protection of Maleldil (God), she states she will put herself under the protection of Ransom (Christ figure). Ransom tells her this choice is enough for now. These Biblical analogies serve to further the theme of good versus evil. The group at St. Anne's is further identified with God and goodness, and by opposing them, the N.I.C.E. is further characterized as bad.

Battle Begun

Battle Begun Summary

Mr. Denniston drives Jane and Mr. Dimble out to the countryside where the group thinks they might find the fence Jane dreamed about in connection with Merlin. The rain is coming down very hard, and the group finds itself unable to spot the gate. Suddenly Jane sees a fire in the distance off the road. Jane tells the others she dreamed about this fire, but she forgot about it until just now. She leads the group across a field to search for the spot where the fire is because she believes this might be where Merlin has made camp.

As the three walk across several fields, and the fire seems farther than they originally thought, a change begins to occur within Jane. She comes to the realization that this walk could be her final one. She does not know what Merlin will do, or if he will be persuaded to join the good side of the battle. She comes to peace with the fact that there is a God, and that there may be an afterlife. Mr. Dimble also experiences internal changes. Near the beginning of the outing he feels fearful, but as the search progresses his fear subsides.

Jane, Mr. Dimble and Mr. Denniston walk until they reach the campsite of which the fire is a part. They search the premises but find nothing of a human except a tent and some attempts at bedding. This appears to be the camp of a vagrant, and the group finds his mode of transportation, a donkey, but not the man himself.

Meanwhile at Belbury, the Fairy meets with Mr. Wither and Mr. Frost. She tells them that she had Mark trailed after he left the N.I.C.E., and he was followed all the way into Bracton College. After that, however, the Fairy's agents were unable to follow Mark because the emergency governor of Edgestow, Lord Feverstone, has banned the institutional police from entering colleges. The Fairy tells the two men that she then saw only three men come out of the college behind Mark. There are two men that she suspects as being a part of the group at St. Anne's, but the third man, Mr. Dimble, she thinks harmless.

Wither and Frost get into a bit of an argument over Jane and Mark. Wither suggests that the N.I.C.E. is placing too much emphasis on having Jane in their company. Frost reminds Wither, rather coarsely, that Jane was observed dreaming about classified information. Furthermore, shortly after having this dream Jane's mind could no longer be spied on, and this occurs only because she has placed herself under the control of an oppositional force. The two men go on to talk about the fact that it is undesirable to bring Jane into their company by force, because this action may lead to a blockage of her psychic gift. Wither and Frost talk about two ways they can cajole Mark into getting his wife to come to them. They can either make him so afraid that he will ask her to come, or they can make her so desirable to him, by using aphrodisiacs, that he will want her to come to him. They rule out this second idea because if they chemically induce



feelings of lust within Mark, they think he may crave any female, and not specifically his wife. They also rule out the first option because people who are motivated by fear are unpredictable. The two men end their conversation by discussing the fact that even without Jane, Mark is desirable for the inner circle of the N.I.C.E. because he is easily brought in and he has good genes.

All the while Mark is being brought to Belbury by police car. He is placed in a room with no cigarettes, food or water, and he is unaware of his location. While left to his own thoughts, Mark comes to terms that he is about to be killed. Because of his state of mind, Mark is able to reflect on his dealings with the N.I.C.E. with great clarity. He finally recognizes that everyone in this organization is an enemy. He realizes that they were all acting with evil intentions and using him. He begins to berate himself for ever believing that the N.I.C.E. was good for him. He finally understands that his need to belong gets him into trouble, and that he sacrifices his real companions for entrance into these groups. Along with all of these realizations, Mark comes to terms with the fact that he has chosen every circumstance in his life. Further, he feels sad that he has dragged Jane into his unstable life. His thoughts are interrupted by a visitor in his room. Upon seeing Frost, Mark knows that he is at Belbury. He is also struck with the sick feeling that just hours before he would have kept company with this frightful man.

Battle Begun Analysis

In this chapter one observes the interesting fact that both Mark and Jane face death, and they both come to terms with its meaning. Both of them have been changed in some significant ways at this point. These changes make them more ready to reunite with one another and carry on a proper marriage relationship.

Jane grows in her understanding of God, or Maleldil. At the same time Mark wrestles with his own demons while in the prison cell. By acknowledging the existence of God, Jane gives up her sense of orderly control over her own life. She also gives up her indignant pride about being able to stand on her own and be her own person. Mark explicitly acknowledges his need to belong as a fault. At the moment that he realizes this fault, Frost and Wither decide to bring Mark into the innermost circle within the N.I.C.E.

The theme of good versus evil is carried on in the race to find Merlin. Frost and Wither talk of news from Bragdon Wood where the search is on, and while they do this, Jane searches for Merlin in fields near the Wood.

For the first time two members of the "inner circle" of the N.I.C.E. have a verbal conflict. Wither and Frost differ in opinion as to the usefulness of Jane, as well as the means by which they should try to get Mark to ask Jane to come to Belbury. The two characters are observed sitting nose to nose during this conversation, a very hostile position.

Wet and Windy Night

Wet and Windy Night Summary

Jane, Mr. Dimble and Mr. Denniston turn back toward the car from the vagrant's camp, and at the moment they do they spot tracks that do not belong to them. They further inspect the camp, but after they find nothing they turn again toward the car. After walking awhile they hear horse hooves. They see a man riding on horseback and he rides away upon being spotted. Mr. Dimble does not say the things he practiced in the language of the eldils because he cannot yell and he is tired.

Back at the house at St. Anne's the rest of the group is amusing itself in idle conversation. This is because they are all nervous about the fate of the three that went out looking for Merlin, especially Mrs. Dimble. Suddenly the group hears the sound of hooves outside the kitchen door. The two men, Ransom and MacPhee, go to open the door and greet the visitor. MacPhee opens the door, and Ransom sees a man in ragged clothes dismount from a horse.

While this is going on, Wither is back at Belbury. He is drifting somewhere between consciousness and unconsciousness. This is the state in which he lives most of his life, and because of this, he hardly ever sleeps. He is awoken from his trance-like state by a phone call. One of his employees has been out looking for the chamber that Merlin has been sleeping in for thousands of years. He has found the chamber, but Merlin is nowhere to be found.

During all this, Frost is in the cell with Mark. He explains to Mark that the murder charge brought against him, and all the details surrounding it, was part of the initiation into the innermost circle at the N.I.C.E. He tells Mark that if he does not complete the initiation he will be killed. He explains the entire plot of the inner circle of the N.I.C.E., and tells Mark that beings known as macrobes communicate with them through the head of Alcasan. These macrobes have instructed the inner group that the fate of human beings is to begin to exist without bodies. The less organic matter the better, in their view. Mark finds all this so fascinating that he begins to be pulled in, but suddenly Frost is interrupted and given a note from outside the cell. Because of the contents of this note, Frost retreats from the room immediately.

The note given to Frost prompts him to go into an inner room with Wither. In it several men are transferring a naked man from a stretcher onto a bed. The man appears to be in a trance, and Wither notes that he does not look like a "master (eldil)." The man wakes up and motions for beer, but he takes no note of Frost and Wither otherwise. The two men think that this man is Merlin, although he does have some inconsistent qualities.

After Frost leaves Mark in the cell alone, Mark begins to feel glad at being free of his compulsion to impress people within the N.I.C.E., and he switches sides mentally. He

aligns his thoughts and feelings with those of Jane and the group at St. Anne's. Suddenly he is attacked by feelings of wanting to belong, and of pride, and he knows that the bad eldils are in the room with him. Eventually he regains his logical self, and resigns himself to the idea of death once more. He relaxes his muscles and slips off to sleep.

Wet and Windy Night Analysis

In this chapter the reader gets an explanation as to why Wither always looks distracted. The author says Wither has been able to make his body go through the motions of everyday life while his mind exists somewhere else. The reader also observes more deception on the part of the N.I.C.E. through Frost, who tells Mark that his murder charge was only part of initiation. The theme of belonging is carried on when Mark listens to Frost and begins to be drawn back in. Mark is also seen being surprised that it is hard to follow his plan once he resolves to distrust anyone from Belbury.

This chapter introduces the reader for the first time to Merlin, alive and awake. His character is not yet described in detail, but the reader does know that there is a mystery because each side of the battle now thinks they have Merlin. At this point the reader does not know which Merlin is the real one, so the winner of the battle is still ambiguous.

The old man at Belbury who is presumed to be Merlin is actually just a vagrant, although this fact is not yet disclosed to the reader. However, because of this, there is a rather comic scene in which Frost and Wither try to speak with the man in Latin, and the man ignores them. The only thing he asks for, using hand signals, is beer. Wither and Frost, at this point, treat the man with the greatest respect while he eats and drinks until he is content and then goes back to sleep without understanding a word they say.

They Have Pulled Down Deep Heaven on Their Heads

They Have Pulled Down Deep Heaven on Their Heads Summary

Frost and Wither become confused when the man they think to be Merlin does not respond to their Latin. They think that maybe if they get someone who speaks Celtic or Welsh then they can communicate with the mysterious man. In the meantime they resolve to allow Mark and Rev. Straik, as their only two pupils advancing toward admittance to the inner circle, to take shifts watching the old man in case he begins to communicate.

At St. Anne's, the real Merlin advances through the door toward Ransom, who greets him in Latin, telling him to stand still and in the name of God say who he is and why he is there. At this, Merlin tells Ransom to alert the master of the house that he has come. At this point, Merlin refuses to recognize Ransom as the leader of the group because of the casual way he is dressed. However, after answering several riddles, Ransom finally makes Merlin understand that he is who he says he is. In fact, when Ransom answers the last riddle, Merlin gets down on one knee and bows to him. Ransom notices that MacPhee has been asleep during this interaction, and he and Merlin head upstairs.

Jane, Mr. Dimble and Mr. Denniston arrive back at the house and find MacPhee alone and asleep in the kitchen. They try to shake MacPhee awake and when it works he tells them what he remembers about the visitor. His description excites the group because this is the very man they have just seen in the field. They suddenly remember that the ladies were in the den, and they go to check on them. Everyone in the den is asleep, just as MacPhee had been. They decide to not wake the sleepers, and they proceed upstairs where they see some lights on.

On looking up the stairs, they see two men looking down at them. One of the men is Ransom, and the other is Merlin. Jane is confused at seeing these two men together because Ransom referred to Merlin as an enemy earlier that night. Now these two men seemed to be just alike. At seeing the group of people, Merlin tells Ransom in Latin, which only the two and Dimble understand, that Jane should be killed. When asked why, Merlin says that God had willed for Jane to bear a child who would have kept humanity safe for a thousand years, but because of her own sins, she has chosen not to conceive a child with Mark, and so she deserves to die. At these words, Mr. Dimble puts Jane behind himself and asks Ransom to explain the meaning of this situation.

Mr. Dimble demands an explanation, and at the same time MacPhee gets very aggressive toward Ransom. He tells him that if he has changed sides after all they have been through, then he might as well be dead. Ransom asks if anyone in the group trusts him, and, surprisingly, Jane speaks up and says that she does. At this, Ransom does



begin to explain what is going on. They had thought that when Merlin woke he would be on the side of the N.I.C.E., but he is actually on the side of the group at St. Anne's. Ransom tells the group that he must command them to accept Merlin as one of the group, but that they can talk about the rest in the late morning.

The next day the Dimbles have a private conversation in their room about their new member, Merlin. Mr. Dimble says that Merlin existed in a very different time period, and it is a strange fit to expect him to get along in today's time. He is unique in that he lived in a time when the boundaries between things were less defined. He is more in-between than any other member of the household.

While the Dimbles converse, Ransom and Merlin also hold a very serious conversation. Merlin tells Ransom that he does not know why he has been awakened, or what powers he might use to help the battle against the N.I.C.E. Ransom begins by explaining that his masters are called Oyeresu, and they are very powerful beings from Deep Heaven. God decreed that they not be able to come down to Earth, but because humans have learned how to invade space, they have broken this barrier and allowed the Oyeresu to enter. The Oyeresu are essentially good beings, and Ransom has met two of them, one of Mars and one of Venus. Ransom tells Merlin that several Oyeresu will descend on the grounds at St. Anne's to interact with Merlin and himself. He tells Merlin that God chose to use him because he is from a time when dabbling in black magic was not yet evil. Because Merlin has practiced black magic, he is not fully good, but because it was not evil to practice it at the time he is not fully evil either. Ransom tells Merlin that the Oyeresu might take both their lives, or make them both crazy. Greater Oyeresu than Ransom has ever seen are set to descend on St. Anne's. At this thought, Merlin begins to waiver. He asks if there are not other ways to fight the N.I.C.E. such as a formal battle. In the end, Ransom tells Merlin that the only way to defeat the N.I.C.E. and their plot against humanity is to receive the Oyeresu themselves. He tells the magician that if evil humans had not traveled into space and bothered the Oyeresu, the barrier would not have been broken, and the plot against humanity would be carried out. But because this barrier was broken, the good side has a chance.

They Have Pulled Down Deep Heaven on Their Heads Analysis

This chapter is filled with Biblical and Christian allusions. Upon meeting Merlin, Ransom calls out to him "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," (p. 271, 1965 Macmillan Paperback Edition). Ransom is perhaps compared to Christ of the Bible when Mr. Dimble tells Mrs. Dimble that they had a hard time explaining to Merlin that Ransom is not the political king of the land, nor does he want to become king. The story, from the Christian Bible, of Christ's birth tells of a people who were looking for a savior in the form of a political king. Christ however, was neither born into a royal family, nor aspired to become king of the land. Ransom makes an allusion to the Biblical story of the tower of Babel while speaking with Merlin. He compares the present trouble with the N.I.C.E.'s plot to create God to the trouble the people of Babel got into when they tried to build a tower to reach God.

There is also an allusion to the Legend of King Arthur, but it is enmeshed with Biblical allusions. When Merlin is asking Ransom questions to determine if he is really a "member of the College," he asks him where is the ring of Arthur. Ransom answers that the ring is on the finger of Arthur himself, because the Lord did not allow him to die, but took him into Heaven with Enoch, Moses and Malchisedec the King. The Arthurian reference is obvious because Arthur himself is mentioned. This statement also references characters from the Christian Bible. According to the Bible, God took Enoch to Heaven before he died a physical death (Hebrews 11:5). Moses, however, was not taken up into Heaven before a physical death, so this reference is strange.

In this chapter the reader gets a good view of the character of Merlin. One might think that this powerful magician from centuries past would be fearless and ready to do anything to help the good side win. However, one sees Merlin, when faced with possible death at the hands of the Oyesu, trying to think of any other way possible to stop the evil eldils and the N.I.C.E. This is surprising, but it furthers the idea that Merlin is more moderate than anyone else in the household. He is neither too courageous, nor too frightened.

Real Life is Meeting

Real Life is Meeting Summary

Mark does not know how much time has passed in the cell, but eventually Frost comes back in and talks to Mark about objectivity. Frost tells Mark that the macrobes desire their human compatriots to be totally free of subjective thought. He tells Mark that he will be trained in objectivity, and when Mark replies that he accepts this training he is led out of the cell and given some food. After Mark's dinner, Frost leads him through the room with the head of Alcasan and into another room. Mark enters this room alone, and when he looks around the room seems very normal. On closer inspection, there are small inconsistencies such as the symmetry of doorways being slightly off. Mark looks around the room and realizes that this room was built to remove human subjectivity because one is compelled to inspect every element of the room.

Mark, because he is out of the presence of anything "normal," begins to get a better understanding of it by studying the abnormal. He chooses to cling to the idea of the normal, and resolves to stand strong against the teachings at Belbury. He knows, however, that he must pretend that he is continuing with his initiation or he will be killed. After his time in the training room, Mark is shown in to see the old man Frost thinks is Merlin. After Mark and the old man are alone Mark speaks to him, and the old man answers in English.

After this initial meeting, Mark begins to spend alternate periods of time in the training room and in the room with the old man. He begins to look forward to the old man's company, although the man is not very good at speaking. Mark tells the old man that they are both in danger, and that he should never answer the other people in the house in English. The old man's chief concern seems to be eating as much food as possible. By asking enough questions, Mark ascertains that the old man had his clothes stolen by someone, but he came away from the theft with a deep admiration for the thief. Mark, by conversing with this man, enters into an exclusive group without even trying.

During Mark's interactions with the fake Merlin, Jane has been helping Mrs. Dimble prepare a lodge that is outside the main house at St. Anne's. This lodge is to be the place where Mrs. Maggs will bring her husband back, and they will spend their first night back together again. Mr. Maggs has been serving a jail sentence for a small theft, and Mrs. Maggs has gone to pick him up because his sentence is now over. Mrs. Dimble tells Jane how to help her prepare the lodge by making beds and cleaning things, and during these preparations Jane thinks of her inevitable meeting with Mark. She knows that she will approach him very differently, with humility this time. Presently, Mrs. Dimble goes inside to look for something.

While Mrs. Dimble is gone, Jane has what she thinks is a hallucination. She sees a person dressed in a crimson robe sitting by the door of the main house. The person resembles Mrs. Dimble, but with something missing. The person seems menacing to



Jane, and when she looks away from its face she sees four or five dwarves. The person, who is a giantess, comes into the lodge with the dwarves and begins using her torch to spread, not fire, but flowers about the room. Suddenly, Mrs. Dimble wakes Jane up. Jane is lying asleep on the floor, and the bed has been torn to shreds.

Jane goes to see Ransom about her dream. After telling him the whole thing, he explains to her that it highlighted one of her major sins. She has spent most of her life being offended by the masculine, and Ransom connects these feelings with pride. He tells her that she can get away from the male, but every person carries traits that are both masculine and feminine, so she cannot escape from the masculine. He explains to her that the woman she saw was probably the earthly representation, or wraith, of the Oyarsa Venus. She may have shown up to foretell the coming of the actual Oyarsa, because Ransom expects many of them to visit the grounds at St. Anne's this very night.

After this discussion, Jane walks out in the garden alone and has a kind of conversion experience. She realizes that all Ransom and the others talk about is not what she considers religion, but they only talk of God. She thinks on her aversion to being seen as an object to be owned, and how that affects her marriage. She comes to terms with the fact that maybe she was created by God to be owned by Him and used for His purposes. She thinks she may have even been created to be owned by others, Ransom and even Mark. Parts of her rebel against these thoughts, but in the end she believes in, and wishes to be aligned with, God.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bultitude, the household bear, has climbed out of the fence. He is lead outside the walls of St. Anne's by his curiosity and longing for Mrs. Maggs. He sits on the side of the road and looks across a field, dreaming of honey. Two workers for the N.I.C.E., having been sent to pick up a wolf, see Mr. Bultitude and take him away to Belbury to be experimented on.

Real Life is Meeting Analysis

This chapter shows the reader further changes within both of the main characters, Mark and Jane. Although they are still apart, the image of each one's spouse is part of the motivation toward change. Mark becomes more resolute to join the good side of the battle. He begins to form his idea of what is normal and good, and Jane is a part of this idea. Jane gains further humility that will be useful later in her marriage to Mark. She becomes comfortable with the idea of being owned by another human. This is a major block in her relationship with Mark at the beginning of the novel.

Some interesting literary devices are used in this chapter as well. Lewis writes two sentences in the first person, stating that he does not understand why the women had to keep them so long in preparing the lodge for Mr. and Mrs. Maggs. His use of this voice breaks up the story, and pushes the reader out of the narration. The reader also observes a very allegorical hallucination, vision or dream of Jane's. There seems to be some imagery having to do with the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, as

well as the mythological character of Venus who was the goddess of love, beauty and vegetation.

The Descent of the Gods

The Descent of the Gods Summary

Everyone at the house at St. Anne's, except Merlin and Ransom, is huddled in the kitchen around the fire. The other two are upstairs in Ransom's room, called the Blue Room, waiting for the Oyeresu to descend. When the beings begin to visit the house all the people in it are affected, both those in the kitchen and the two in the Blue Room. When Mercury descends, knowledge and thoughts flow freely between Ransom and Merlin while, downstairs, there has never been a wittier, more eloquent conversation among the group. He is referred to as the Lord of Meaning, and in the Blue Room Ransom and Merlin share words and thoughts in a free-flowing manner. Then, as Venus comes upon the house, the couples downstairs begin getting along especially well. Upstairs the temperature rises, and a sweet breeze wafts through the room. Later, Mars descends and all the people upstairs and down are filled with loyalty and admiration for each other. Everyone finds himself with great courage when Mars, also called Malacandra, inhabits the house. Fourthly, Saturn descends into the Blue Room. Everyone in the house becomes very cold, and finally the last Oyeresu descends. This being is referred to as the "King of Kings" and Jove. This being causes everyone in the house to feel regal and proud. When all the Oyeresu are assembled, they impart power to Merlin, and later that night he is dropped off near Belbury to infiltrate the N.I.C.E.

Inside the institute at Belbury, Mark is asleep beside the old man when Frost wakes him. Three men enter the room: Frost, Wither and a man Mark has never seen before. This new man is Merlin, but no one at the N.I.C.E. knows this fact yet, as they still believe the old man to be the real Merlin. Merlin talks with Wither in Latin, and after this he begins to control the old man with his new powers. He holds a conversation with the old man in a language unknown to anyone in the room but himself. He puts the words in the old man's mouth. The old man is afraid at being controlled, but at no point speaks in English to give away the fact that he is not Merlin. Merlin uses the old man to make Frost and Wither think he is giving orders to them. They must kiss the dirty hands of the old man, whom they still think is Merlin. After this, Frost and Wither leave the room to get the old man some clothes, and Merlin puts Mark to sleep.

Frost and Wither have a conversation outside the room, and they wonder whether the old man is really Merlin. They go to Wither's apartment within the N.I.C.E. to get some clothes for the old man. They do not trust the real Merlin, although they do not yet suspect him to be Merlin. They agree that the real and fake Merlins must be detained. While on this errand, the two men remember that there is a great feast being held that night because the figurehead, Mr. Jules, is coming to the N.I.C.E., and they must find something to do with the two old men so that no one else sees them.

On coming back into the room with Mark and the old men, Wither and Frost see that Mark is asleep and Merlin blames it on the vagrant. Merlin tells the men that he will not stay in the room any longer with a conjurer. Merlin tells the men that the tramp says that

he must be taken to look at everything in the house, and he will go with Wither only. Frost objects, but in the end they decide that there must be someone to greet Mr. Jules when he arrives anyway. After Merlin, the tramp and Wither leave the room, Frost wakes Mark and takes him to the room in which he is being trained in objectivity.

When Mark gets to this room, there is a large crucifix on the floor in the center of the room. Frost tells Mark to stomp on it and further insult it. Mark does not want to do this, not because he is a religious man, but because he identifies with the helplessness of the Christ image. Finally Mark tells Frost that he will not complete the training, and just then Merlin, the tramp and Wither walk through the door on their tour.

Meanwhile, Mr. Jules has already been waiting in Wither's study for quite some time, and other members of the N.I.C.E. are attempting to entertain him. Just when the conversation seems unbearable, Wither comes in followed by the rest of the group. Wither has just learned that his fake Merlin and the real Merlin intend to sit down with everyone for dinner. Wither introduces the vagrant as an important foreign guest, Dr. Ambrosius. Just when Mr. Jules is expressing his dislike for the priestly look of the interpreter, who is actually Merlin, Rev. Straik pushes himself toward Jules to ask a question. By his dress, Jules can tell that Straik is also a clergyman, and he gets annoyed that Wither has been appointing people to ranks without his knowledge.

The Descent of the Gods Analysis

In this chapter the two sides of the battle are seen in the same setting as Merlin infiltrates Belbury. The battle nears its end as the reader observes the two people highest up in the inner circle of the N.I.C.E., Frost and Wither, duped by Merlin. Even after coming into their environment, Merlin maintains control of the situation. There is still an element, one that arose in a previous chapter, of farce as the two "important" men, Wither and Frost, are made to kiss the dirty hands and feet of the vagrant. They are confused by the situation enough to keep doing things that make themselves look silly.

There are many allusions to Roman mythology in connection to the Oyeresu. Each of them has a planetary name, and the characteristics of each are the same as those connected with the characters of the same names in Roman mythology. There is also another rather obvious Christ reference when Mark is asked to defile the crucifix. Mark identifies with the Christ image, and this marks the beginning of his real conversion to the same belief system that Jane is a part of.

We see the fruition of Merlin's new powers when he is able to control the tramp, and make him look as if he is speaking an unknown language. This is a turning point in the plot because it keeps Wither and Frost thinking that the tramp may really be Merlin. If Merlin cannot stay in the house at Belbury, then the N.I.C.E. might not be defeated.

Banquet at Belbury

Banquet at Belbury Summary

At the banquet, Mark feels happy and hopeful. He notices that the tramp is seated between Mr. Jules and Mr. Wither. Behind him stands Merlin. Jules gets up to deliver a speech to the crowd. No one takes notice of his words until they stop making sense. Jules thinks he is speaking normally, but the words coming out of his mouth are all gibberish. Wither rises to stop him from speaking, and begins to make apologies for their figurehead. However, his words come out garbled and meaningless as well. The dinner guests begin to whisper to one another, but their words are gibberish as well. Even when Frost tries to write a note the words do not make sense. The room erupts in chaos as everyone tries to regain order. Suddenly there is a shot, and Jules is dead. The Fairy shoots Jules just before the people begin to notice that there are animals loose in the room. During the chaos, Mark sees the Fairy lock the main door, but in the ensuing chaos caused by the unintelligible speech and the deadly animals, the Fairy is trampled to death. Another member of the N.I.C.E., Steele, is also trampled to death, but this time by an elephant.

During the chaos, Merlin slips out the door. He is the reason for the garbled speech because he cast a "curse of Babel" on the crowd. He goes to another part of the house and lets all the experimental animals out to antagonize the crowd. There is only one animal he retains from the crowd, Mr. Bultitude. He sends Bultitude home to St. Anne's at once. While Merlin's back is turned, the tramp runs away with pockets full of food and a donkey. Merlin also frees all the prisoners who are waiting to be "reformed" by the N.I.C.E., and after finding Mr. Maggs, he gives him a letter from Mrs. Maggs telling him to come to the house at St. Anne's.

After setting the animals and criminals free, Merlin finds Mark in the banquet hall and wakes him with cold water. Mark notices that everyone in the room is dead, and then receives from Merlin a note from Jane. Her message says that he should come to her at St. Anne's.

During the beginning of the confusion, Wither notices that the real Merlin is orchestrating it all. He knows that powers are being used that are not merely human, and he knows that the barrier between the heavenly Oyesu and the Earth has been broken, and all is lost. He meets Straik in the hallway along with Filostrato. The two members of the inner circle of the N.I.C.E., Wither and Straik, escort Filostrato to the Head. While the other two are familiar with the evil eldils and their plot against humanity, Filostrato is oblivious. After entering into the room of the Head, Straik and Wither cut off Filostrato's head. Soon after this they realize that the Head will ask for another head, and they struggle to sacrifice each other. Wither slits Straik's throat, but then is confronted by a bear in the anteroom.



All the while, Lord Feverstone has been hiding in a dish cupboard to get away from the crowd and the animals. After the chaos calms down, he makes his way to the garage and gets into a car. There is someone in the back seat of the car, but when he addresses the person he becomes unable to control his own body. He begins to drive toward Edgestow, but he is not controlling his body as it drives too fast and recklessly.

Frost too waits for the chaos to end before he makes a move. He goes to the chamber where the Head is kept, and he sees Straik dead. Because his body is experiencing a stress response, he hardly notices Wither and Filostrato also dead. He notices that the head of Alcasan is missing from its podium. After this, he goes to the garage and gets gasoline. He takes as much as he can carry to the room where Mark was being trained in objectivity. He douses the room with the gasoline, and sets it on fire. He dies still denying his feelings, opinions and even his soul.

Banquet at Belbury Analysis

This chapter shows the reader the hideous end of the people who working for the destruction of mankind. We see the members of this group killing each other, and some of them, such as Frost, committing suicide. Terrible violence marks almost every page of this chapter, and most of it is perpetrated by N.I.C.E. members against N.I.C.E. members. These events serve to further characterize the people who make up this organization as well as the N.I.C.E. as a whole.

Another Biblical allusion is found in this chapter. Merlin casts a "curse of Babel" on the people in the banquet hall. This event carries on the theme of pride, because in the story of the Tower of Babel the people's downfall is pride. In this story, found in the book of Genesis, Chapter 11, the people decide to build a tower to reach the heavens. Their prideful actions cause God to confuse their language so that they do not understand one another.

The theme of good versus evil is finalized in this chapter because the evil group self-destructs. The human leader of the N.I.C.E., Wither, recognizes that the fight is over when Merlin puts the curse of Babel on the dinner guests. This triumph of good is foreshadowed in the beginning of the chapter when Mark sits down to dinner feeling very hopeful and good. He has aligned himself with the people at St. Anne's, and therefore is on the side of the good.

Venus at St. Anne's

Venus at St. Anne's Summary

In the morning of the next day Mark is still traveling to St. Anne's. After leaving Belbury, he runs into a succession of people who treat him very kindly, even though they do not know him personally. Mark stays at an inn, and when he is about to leave he realizes that he is a little shy to go and see Jane. He knows that Jane is of great value, and that she has many gifts. He feels unworthy of her love.

At the same time, Lord Feverstone has crashed his car. He climbs out of the vehicle and sees a tall man wearing a robe standing in front of him. The man starts to walk away, and Feverstone follows him briefly. Then the man says something to a horse standing nearby, and suddenly he is riding the horse off into the distance. Lord Feverstone tries to make his way to Edgestow on foot, but as he meets more and more people on the road who tell him not to travel there, he decides to go toward London. However, after this point in his journey he begins to feel the ground sinking around him. A wave, made of earth, overtakes him and the ground swallows him.

While Mark is traveling, the group at St. Anne's is preparing for a farewell dinner for Dr. Ransom. The men are downstairs making the food, and the women are upstairs getting dressed. The clothes that the women have to pick from are the finest clothes they have seen, and each of them looks more radiant than ever when she finds the dress meant for her. There are no mirrors, however, so each woman must trust the opinions of the others about which dress to pick. As the women dress they talk about why Dr. Ransom must go away. It seems he will be taken back up to Perelandra, or Venus, that night.

While the group dines, they talk about why the battle took place in Britain. Dr. Dimble explains to the group that Britain exists as a dichotomy, that is, for everything that is good, there is a dark counterpart. The good part, for the purpose of this conversation, is called Logres. Ransom tells the group that each land has its own evil haunting it, so Britain is not special in having Logres. It is only that they must focus on their own struggle in order to make the world better. The group talks about how the whole town of Edgestow was destroyed. At the end of the conversation, Mr. Bultitude knocks on the door and the group receives him happily, and Mrs. Maggs leaves the room to tend to his needs.

A moment later, Mrs. Maggs comes back in screaming. There seems to be a female bear in the house that has taken a liking to Mr. Bultitude. In fact, all the animals on the grounds of St. Anne's are paired. Ransom tells the group that Venus herself is visiting them, she is the last of the gods to ascend, and with her will go Dr. Ransom. One by one, Ransom sends the group members out of the room. First the Dimbles go, and later Mrs. Maggs because her husband finally makes it to the house. Instead of going to the lodge outside the house, Mrs. Dimble has prepared a room inside the house for Mr. and Mrs. Maggs. Just then, Ransom tells Jane that she should go because Mark is waiting

for her in the lodge outside the main house. It is her own "marriage chamber" that she prepared earlier. On parting, Ransom tells Jane that she will no longer have her strange dreams, but that instead she should have children.

Before arriving at the house at St. Anne's, Mark decides that he will give Jane a chance to get out of the marriage. The same feelings that have made Jane more humble as a wife have brought humility to Mark. However, when Jane is on her way to the lodge she worries that he might not be there. She is glad to see through a window, clothes piled in a chair, because this means that Mark is there. She is ready to submit fully in the marriage relationship, and she goes into the lodge.

Venus at St. Anne's Analysis

Lewis uses this chapter to show that the two main characters have been fully changed from the people they were when the novel began. Mark's pride at being respected among exclusive groups that take his time away from his marriage is completely gone. He realizes what is really important, and he resolves to approach his relationship with humility and honor. Jane has lost her cold closed-off personality, and she has grown into a woman who is willing to open up to Mark as her husband. Her stiff-necked pride is also gone, and in its place is perfect submission and humility.

The changes in the main characters can be seen as the resolution in the theme of pride. In the beginning of the novel, both characters are very prideful, but in this chapter the reader observes much humility in both. The pride of the N.I.C.E. is finally punished, and humility reigns at the house at St. Anne's.

There is a bit of irony toward the beginning of the chapter regarding the N.I.C.E. It seems that when Mark leaves the town where the N.I.C.E. has its headquarters he begins to run into people who are actually nice to him. This is in direct opposition with the people within the N.I.C.E. who are not at all nice.

There are more Christ references in this chapter as Dr. Ransom explains why he must go back to Perelandra. Because Perelandra has been referred to as Heaven earlier in the book, Ransom's ascension to Perelandra references Christ's ascension into Heaven. There is a vague Biblical reference to Sodom and Gomorrah, found in the book of Genesis, when the group talks about why it was necessary for all of Edgestow to be destroyed.

The theme of the battle between good and evil is clearly defined in this chapter. When the group is talking at dinner, Ransom and Mr. Dimble explain the dichotomy that is Britain and Logres. Logres is that part of Britain that is heroic and good. Mr. Dimble references the Arthurian legend when he says that "for every Arthur there is a Mordred, for every Logres there is Britain."

Characters

Mark Studdock

Mark is one of the two main characters in this novel. He is a sociologist, and a member of the Progressive Element at Bracton College. He is the husband of Jane Studdock, and his character changes greatly during the course of the novel. In the beginning of the story Mark is inattentive toward Jane, and he is primarily concerned with reaching the inner circle of any social group. He pursues his goal of gaining admittance into these exclusive groups at almost any cost. Mark is a bit prideful when it comes to his importance within these groups, and he is mostly unaware of his need to feel like he belongs. He is a good person, but his judgment is easily clouded by the opinions of others. Mark becomes a member of the evil governmental organization called the National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments (the N.I.C.E.). He joins this group even when some parts of his personality tell him it is a bad idea. Once inside the inner circle of this institute Mark realizes that he has been wrong. He begins to change, and he becomes more humble. By the end of the novel, Mark takes a different approach to his marriage, and he regards Jane with reverence and love. Mark finally becomes self-aware.

Jane Studdock

Jane Studdock has recently abandoned her academic career to become a stay-at-home wife. She is twenty-three years old. Her husband is Mark Studdock, and she regards him with cold indifference in the beginning of the novel. She has dreams that reveal what is happening in the present within the N.I.C.E., as well as other places. At first she wants these dreams to stop. She is plagued with feelings of resentment, pride, abandonment and loneliness. Upon meeting Dr. Ransom, however, her personality begins to change. She joins a group of people who live at a place called St. Anne's. This group represents all that is good. She goes through a transformation in which she learns that she was created to be used for good. She begins to become more humble as the novel progresses. After a long separation from Mark, she reunites with him and her feelings toward him are warm and submissive.

Dr. Ransom, The Fisher King, the Pendragon, the Director

Dr. Ransom is one of the few characters common throughout this novel and the previous two novels in the trilogy. His history is briefly recapitulated in this novel. It seems that he has disappeared twice in his life, and one of these times he came back to say that he had been kidnapped and taken to the planet Mars. The second time he went to Venus, or Perelandra. While he was on Mars, he met heavenly beings called eldils, as well as beings called Oyesu. He communicates with these groups of beings in this



novel, and it is them that help save humanity, by communicating with Dr. Ransom. He is the leader of the group at St. Anne's. He is a kind man, and often in the novel he is indirectly compared to Jesus Christ. He is also a very wise man, and he gives Jane much advice about her marriage with Mark. He cultivates peace within those that are close to him, both human and animal alike. At the end of the novel, he goes back to Venus.

Mr. and Mrs. Dimble

This couple is part of the group at St. Anne's, and they are the reason Jane comes to know of this group and be protected within it. Sometime before the story's beginning, the Dimbles have acted toward Jane as a set of surrogate parents. Mr. Dimble teaches at Bracton College, and Mrs. Dimble takes a special liking to Jane when she is a pupil of Mr. Dimble's. It is they who tell Jane to go to St. Anne's after she tells them of the terrible dreams she is having. After the battle begins, Mr. Dimble gets a chance to speak to Mark and tries to get him to leave the N.I.C.E., but to no avail. Mr. Dimble is integral to the group because he knows the language of the eldils.

Mrs. Ivy Maggs

Mrs. Maggs begins the story as a housekeeper for the Studdocks. However, when the N.I.C.E. destroys Bragdon Wood, she is thrown out of her house, which is on the edge of the Wood. She goes to live at St. Anne's because of the N.I.C.E.'s actions. When she comes to live at the house at St. Anne's, she is no longer a part of the lower class. She is regarded as an equal among members of this group.

Miss Grace Ironwood

Miss Ironwood is a medical doctor living at the house at St. Anne's. The details of her life are not described in the book. She is the person who talks to Jane before Jane is taken to see Dr. Ransom. Mrs. Ironwood takes care of Dr. Ransom because he was somehow wounded on Venus, and he is in great pain from this wound.

Mr. MacPhee

Mr. MacPhee also lives at the house at St. Anne's, and he is the resident skeptic. He is not a disbeliever, but he holds to objectivity as strongly as possible. He has known Dr. Ransom longer than anyone else in the house, and he is the one who fills Jane in on Ransom's history. However, while recounting this history, with the stories of Mars and Venus, he makes sure to point out that this is all what Ransom said and that it is possible that these were hallucinations. He holds to his objectivity through the end of the novel, but this type of objectivity is open-minded and not markedly proud, so it is not undesirable.

Mr. and Mrs. Denniston

These are two more inhabitants of the house at St. Anne's. It is revealed at the beginning of the novel that Mr. Denniston had recently been going after the same post within Bracton College as Mark. However, Mark got the position. The Dennistons generally help keep the grounds and the house at St. Anne's.

Merlin

Merlin does not come into the novel until about halfway through. It seems he has been sleeping in a sort of underground cave for centuries, and that the evil eldils who control the N.I.C.E. knew about his presence. The plot of the N.I.C.E. is to find him when he wakes and use his powers to destroy most of humanity. However, upon waking, Merlin goes to the house at St. Anne's and aligns himself with their cause. He is a man who is marked by characteristics from a different time. He does not understand governmental structures of the time, and he is out of place even at the dinner table because he has never seen a fork. After he realizes his part in the plan to save humanity, he tries to figure out another way to go about defeating the N.I.C.E., so the reader gets the impression he is not fearless, although he does act with bravery. Ransom tells him he was chosen to help by the good eldils because he is from a time when things were more moderate than they are now. Merlin is neither too good, nor too evil. After the Oyesu descend at St. Anne's, Merlin is endowed with superhuman powers, and he uses them to break up the N.I.C.E. In the end of the novel, he rides off on a horse.

The old tramp, the fake Merlin

When Merlin wakes, he steals clothes from an old tramp who had made camp for the night near where Merlin was sleeping. When the N.I.C.E. search party finds the tramp lying naked on the ground, they take him to be Merlin and bring him to the N.I.C.E. The tramp does not tell anyone he is not Merlin because they never speak to him in English because they think he is from centuries past. He takes advantage of the free food and beer he receives from the institute. Mark speaks to him without knowing who he is supposed to be, and the tramp and Mark form a relationship. Later, the tramp is used by Merlin to make the people in the N.I.C.E. believe he is a priest. The tramp eventually escapes after the N.I.C.E. begins to self-destruct.

Lord Feverstone

Lord Feverstone is a member of the N.I.C.E., but he is not in the inner circle of people who communicate with the dark eldils. He is the person who made sure it was Mark who got the position at Bracton College. He is also the person who takes Mark to the N.I.C.E. for the first time and introduces him to Mr. Wither. Feverstone sympathizes with Dr. Ransom's enemy from the previous two novels. He is an integral part of the N.I.C.E. when it comes to the early business of gaining public approval, but near the end of the

novel Wither and Frost decide he is not very useful anymore. He is appointed emergency governor of Edgestow because they think that if the people get angry he can be sacrificed.

Mr. Wither

Mr. Wither is the Deputy Director of the N.I.C.E., and he is, for all intents and purposes, the leader. He is a member of the inner circle within the N.I.C.E., and he communicates with the dark eldils regarding the plot against humanity. Wither has trained his mind to be able to carry out day-to-day tasks without his attention, and the rest of his mind wanders. Almost any conversation he has is one he is not paying attention to. He takes long walks around the N.I.C.E., and at one point Mark punches a ghost, or hallucination, of Wither, but it is unclear which it is.

Mr. Jules

Jules is the figurehead of the N.I.C.E., but he thinks he is the real Director. He does not live at the facilities at Belbury, but when he stops in everyone treats him as if he is in control. He was picked to be the public face of the N.I.C.E. because he was already known and liked.

Mr. Frost

Mr. Frost is a sharp man who is concerned with objectivity to the point of denying his own soul. His kind of objectivity is a prideful one because he denies everything about himself that is in the least bit subjective, down to the motives for his actions. He is in the inner circle of the N.I.C.E., and he is almost as powerful as Wither. Frost is the one able to spy on Jane's dreams by telekinesis. His own pursuit of objectivity leads him to end his life after the N.I.C.E. begins to fall apart.

Reverend Straik

Reverend Straik is also a member of the inner circle in the N.I.C.E., but he is newer to it than Frost and Wither. He is a Reverend, and is therefore preoccupied with Biblical symbolism. He is the one who tells Mark that the Bible speaks of a time when man would sit on the throne of the universe, and that time is drawing near. Wither kills him during the chaos after the banquet at the N.I.C.E.

Professor Filostrato

Professor Filostrato is a member of the N.I.C.E. who has worked on keeping the head of Alcasan alive. He is a scientist who knows about the Head, but who is not in the inner

circle. He does not know about the dark eldils, but he is sacrificed for his head in the end.

The Fairy, Miss Hardcastle

The Fairy is the head of the Institutional Police. She is a woman who shows no mercy. She is willing to lie, manipulate and torture to achieve desired ends. However, she is not in the inner circle of the N.I.C.E., so she is not in on the true business. She is quick to act, and she does not know the meaning of mercy. She is killed during the chaos in the banquet hall.

Alcasan

Alcasan is a prisoner who, it is stated to the public, is to be rehabilitated. However, the N.I.C.E. really takes his head, attaches it to artificial air and saliva tubes, and grows its brain to superhuman proportions. The dark eldils, or Marcrobes, speak through this head.

The eldils

These are heavenly beings that sometimes inhabit specific planets, but generally belong in space. They are free to move about in the heavens. There are both good and bad eldils. The bad, or dark, eldils are working with the N.I.C.E., while the good eldils communicate with Dr. Ransom at St. Anne's.

The Oyeresu

These are heavenly beings that are very powerful. The ones that are in this story include Oyeresu from the planets of Mars, Venus, Mercury, Jupiter and Saturn. These are referred to as gods, and they possess characteristics of the Roman gods who share their names.

Objects/Places

Edgestow

Edgestow is the town in which the novel begins. Bracton College is in Edgestow, as well as Bragdon Wood. The Studdocks, Dimbles and Maggs's live in Edgestow. This is the town which is torn apart by the N.I.C.E. while they are looking for Merlin. Edgestow is destroyed supernaturally in the end of the book.

Bracton College

Bracton College is the place where Mark has a fellowship. The Progressive Element is part of the fellowship at Bracton, and the college is basically harmless except for their affiliation with the N.I.C.E. Many members of the fellows of Bracton are easily swayed by manipulation. It is Bracton College that sells Bragdon Wood to the N.I.C.E.

Bragdon Wood

Bragdon Wood is part of the property belonging to Bracton College. It has magical connotations because of a well, "Merlin's Well," that stands at its center. It is sold to the N.I.C.E., and they tear it up looking for Merlin himself.

The Wynd River

The Wynd River runs through the middle of Edgestow. The N.I.C.E., after gaining control of Edgestow, diverts the Wynd away from Edgestow through a town called Cure Hardy.

Belbury, the N.I.C.E. facility

Belbury is the town in which the N.I.C.E. facility is found. The N.I.C.E. takes over an old blood transfusion office and builds on to it.

St. Anne's on the Hill

The house at St. Anne's on the Hill is where all the people stay that are fighting for the ultimate good. It is a place that is safe and full of hope. There is a garden there, as well as a many-roomed house.

Mark's wallet

The first night he stays at Belbury, Mark notices he has lost his wallet. One of the N.I.C.E. members leaves his post there that night as well. This man ends up murdered, and the N.I.C.E. police plant Mark's wallet at the scene. Because of this, they have leverage to bargain with Mark and try to get him to stay under their protection and do what they want him to do.

The Head

Alcasan's head is kept artificially alive with air and saliva through tubes. Its brain has been allowed to spill out the top of the skull. The dark eldils, or Macrobes, speak to Wither, Frost and Straik through this head.

The Objective Room

This is the room in which Mark is "trained in objectivity." There are many things in this room that are just slightly discomfoting. It is asymmetrical, but only slightly. There are dots on the ceiling, but they seemingly have no pattern. It is in this room where Mark decides to be a part of the side fighting for good.

The Blue Room

This is the room that Dr. Ransom spends most of his time in. It is here Jane is introduced to him, and has her first change of heart toward humility. This is the room in which the Oyeresu descend to impart superhuman powers to Merlin. The walls in this room are blue.

Themes

Good versus Evil

The theme of good versus evil is evident throughout the entire novel. Near the beginning, the reader gets a sense that the people within the N.I.C.E. do not have aims that are good. Their descriptions of the future they hope to achieve offend the conscience upon reading them. It takes a little while longer for the "good" characters to fully define themselves to the reader, but when Jane goes to St. Anne's with the news of a disturbing dream she has had, the reader guesses that this group is good. Upon meeting with Dr. Ransom Jane undergoes some transformations within herself that show she has grown as a person because of this interaction. The two sides could not be more different from one another. The N.I.C.E. is a hierarchical institute, while St. Anne's is based on egalitarian principles.

Wither and Frost define the N.I.C.E.'s plan to wipe out most organic matter from the Earth, and this is contrasted with the way the people of St. Anne's take care of animals and plants alike. The battle becomes clearly defined after Jane dreams of Merlin awake. The two groups basically race to see who can get Merlin before he joins the other side. This aim defines the crux of the battle because whichever group wins over Merlin will win the power that comes with him. While the "good" side is aware of exactly who their enemy is, the "evil" side, that of the N.I.C.E., has no idea which group may be rising in opposition to them.

The battle ends in the classic way, with good triumphing over evil after many struggles. The N.I.C.E. is cursed with an inability to speak words that make sense, and because of this the people within it turn on each other. The people at St. Anne's work together while the people in the N.I.C.E. tear each other down and bring about their own destruction.

Pride versus Humility

During the beginning of the novel, the reader observes both of the main characters, Jane and Mark, exhibiting different kinds of pride. Jane is prideful in her feelings toward Mark within the marriage. She does not want to be "owned" in any way, and she will, therefore, not submit to him under any circumstances. As a result of her pride, Jane begins to feel no compassion for Mark. At the same time, Mark is proud of his accomplishments in gaining entrance into the Fellows at Bracton, as well as the Progressive Element within the Fellowship. Because his goals lie with these things, he pays little attention to his relationship with Jane. Therefore, the pride of both Jane and Mark contribute to the deterioration of their marriage.

As Jane spends more and more time at St. Anne's, she comes to know more about herself. By being more introspective, she comes to learn that her aversion to being submissive is sometimes a great disadvantage to her relationships with other people,

including Mark. Mark, in the meantime, upon realizing that the people within the N.I.C.E. are actually his enemies, begins to long for Jane, and he realizes that she was precious and wonderful the entire time.

By the time they begin to look forward to the time when they can be reunited they both have very different attitudes toward one another. Both Mark and Jane have traded pride for humility, and they regard each other in a way that is helpful for their relationship.

The theme of pride is also evident in the aims of the N.I.C.E. When the people within this institute make it their goal to create God, under the influence of the dark eldils, they undertake a prideful action. The N.I.C.E. is compared to the group of people in the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel who try to build a tower tall enough to reach heaven. For man to think he can create God is very prideful indeed, and because of their pride, the people in the N.I.C.E. are punished.

The Christian Conversion Experience

There are many Biblical allusions within this work, and many of them center on the people at St. Anne's, particularly Dr. Ransom. He is compared many times to Jesus Christ, and he is the religious leader of this group. The reader observes Jane being changed, not necessarily always of her own will, ever since her first meeting with Dr. Ransom. Strange feelings rise up within her at this meeting, both about herself and about Mark.

During subsequent interactions with Dr. Ransom, Jane realizes she has a creator, and she was created for a purpose. She realizes she was created to be owned and used by her creator, but that he loves her and wants the best for her. She basically undergoes the Christian conversion experience, but the novel uses different names for God and Jesus.

This is an important theme in the book because without this change of heart, Jane would not be able to fully love Mark in a way helpful to their marriage. Mark also undergoes somewhat of a conversion, but his is based less on overtly religious symbolism.

Style

Point of View

This novel is mostly written from the third person omniscient point of view. This is observed in the fact that many characters are shown alone, or in small groups, and everything about what happens is evident to the reader. However, there are several times when C.S. Lewis speaks to the reader as himself in the first person. Through these interjections he expresses his opinions and preferences.

Setting

The setting of this novel is post-war England, in the towns of Edgestow, Belbury and surrounding towns. In the beginning of the novel, both main characters are living in Edgestow, which is a small college town. This town includes Bracton College, Bragdon Wood and a "downtown" area in which to shop.

As the novel progresses, Mark begins staying at the N.I.C.E. institute at Belbury. The institute has expansive grounds, but not the sort that one would enjoy walking all over. The institute itself is made up of long passageways and many rooms. Mark describes it as looking like a municipal cemetery.

Shortly after Mark begins staying at Belbury, Jane goes to stay at the house at St. Anne's on the Hill. This house is big, but cozy, and everyone works for its upkeep. There are gardens there, and many animals live on the grounds. The weather is mostly good at St. Anne's, and even when it is foggy at Edgestow, it is clear there. This place is calming and beautiful.

Language and Meaning

The language in this novel is conversational and easy. It is easy to tell that C.S. Lewis is English because of some of his word choices. However, because many of the characters in this novel are part of an academic community, the vocabulary is lofty at times. While the language of the people within the world of academia is more formal, the narrator's language is more conversational. This structure makes reading long narrations enjoyable, but during lengthy portions of dialogue, reading is more tedious.

There are places in which the narrator uses foreign words, and these are not translated for the reader. This use of language is a little confusing if one is not familiar with the languages being used. In the last half of the novel, the characters use a bit of Latin to try to talk to the fake Merlin. This, however, is mostly translated via footnotes. The use of the Latin passages serves to envelope the reader in this fantasy world.

Structure

This novel is divided into seventeen chapters, each having approximately five subdivisions. Each chapter is about twenty pages long, and does not necessarily resolve itself so that the reader wants to continue reading into the next chapter. The author uses a lot of dialogue to move the plot along, and although the book itself is lengthy, the story takes place in a matter of days. The length of the book is due to the fact that Lewis tells two stories that are going on simultaneously.

The novel presents itself as two stories: that of Mark and that of Jane. Most chapters are, therefore, split between the two characters. Each chapter has a few numbered divisions, and the author uses these divisions to switch which character he is talking about. The novel flows chronologically, but the author tells about one character, and he then backs up and tells what the other was doing during this time. Even though this style is choppy, it does not distract from the quality of the story.

Quotes

"We all have our different languages; but we all really mean the same thing."
Chap. 2, Dinner With the Sub-Warden, p. 37.

"We think the lamb gentle because its wool is soft to our hands: men call a woman voluptuous when she arouses voluptuous feelings in them. Jane's body...was so exactly to Mark's mind that it was all but impossible for him not to attribute to her the same sensations which she excited in him."
Chap. 2, Dinner With the Sub-Warden, p. 46.

"At the name of Jesus, Mark, who would have lectured on abortion or perversion to an audience of young women without a qualm, felt himself so embarrassed that he knew his cheeks were slightly reddening; and he became so angry with himself and Mr. Straik at this discovery that they then proceeded to redden very much indeed."
Chap. 4, The Liquidation of Anachronisms, pp. 78-79.

"...his [Mark's] education had had the curious effect of making things that he read and wrote more real to him than the things he saw."
Chap. 4, The Liquidation of Anachronisms, p.87 1965.

"The citizen and the honest man which had been awakened in Mark by the conversation, quailed a little; his other and far stronger self, the self that was anxious at all costs not to be placed among the outsiders, leaped out, fully alarmed."
Chap. 5, Elasticity, p. 100.

"'Exactly,' said Filostrato. 'It is folly to talk of peaceful revolutions.'"
Chap. 6, Fog, p. 130.

"It all slipped past in the chatter of laughter, of that intimate laughter between fellow professionals, which of all earthly powers is strongest to make men do very bad things before they are yet, individually, very bad men."
Chap. 6, Fog, p. 130.

"'What would you—what would the people you are talking of—say about a case like that?' 'I will tell you if you really want to know,' said the Director. 'Please,' said Jane reluctantly. 'They would say,' he answered, 'that you do not fail in obedience through lack of love, but have lost love because you never attempted obedience.'"
Chap. 7, The Pendragon, p. 147.



"Those who are enjoying something, or suffering something together, are companions. Those who enjoy or suffer one another are not."
Chap. 7, The Pendragon, p. 148.

"But you will see that obedience and rule are more like a dance than a drill—specially between man and woman where the roles are always changing."
Chap. 7, The Pendragon, p. 149.

"Nature is the ladder we have climbed up by, now we kick her away."
Chap. 8, Moonlight at Belbury, p. 177.

"'Then what we are up against,' said Dimble, 'is a criminal's brain swollen to super-human proportions and experiencing a mode of consciousness which we can't imagine, but which is presumably a consciousness of agony and hatred.'"
Chap. 9, The Saracen's Head, p. 196.

"Dreams of the far future destiny of man were dragging up from its shallow and unquiet grave the old dream of Man as God."
Chap. 9, The Saracen's Head, p. 203.

"'You must risk that,' said Dimble...'The battle has started. I'm offering you a place on the right side. I don't know which will win.' 'As a matter of fact,' said Mark, 'I had been thinking of leaving.'"
Chap. 10, The Conquered City, p. 223.

"The approval of one's own conscience is a very heady draught: and specially for those who are not accustomed to it."
Chap. 12, Wet and Windy Night, p.268.

"Good is always getting better and bad is always getting worse: the possibilities of even apparent neutrality are always diminishing."
Chap. 13, They Have Pulled Down Deep Heaven on Their Heads, p. 283.

"For the Hideous Strength confronts us and it is as in the days when Nimrod built a tower to reach heaven."
Chap. 13, They Have Pulled Down Deep Heaven on Their Heads, p. 288.

"And day by day, as the process went on, that idea of the Straight or the Normal which had occurred to him during his first visit to this room, grew stronger and more solid in his mind till it had become a kind of mountain."
Chap. 14, "Real Life is Meeting," p. 310.

"In fighting those who serve devils one always has this on one's side; their Masters hate them as much as they hate us."
Chap. 14, "Real Life is Meeting," p.317.

"Then, quite sharply, it occurred to her that the Director never talked about Religion; nor did the Dimbles nor Camilla. They talked about God. They had no picture in their minds of some mist streaming upward; rather of strong, skillful hands thrust down to make, and mend, perhaps even to destroy."
Chap. 14, "Real Life is Meeting," p.3 18.

"The laws of the universe are never broken. Your mistake is to think that the little regularities we have observed on one planet for a few hundred years are the real unbreakable laws; whereas they are only the remote results which the true laws bring about more often than not; as a kind of accident."
Chap. 17, Venus at St. Anne's, p. 368.

"Seeing people off is always folly. It's neither good mirth nor good sorrow."
Chap. 17, Venus and St. Anne's, p. 376.

Topics for Discussion

Why do you think that C.S. Lewis depends so heavily on references to the Legend of King Arthur? Are there more elements of this story that he could have included in his novel?

Discuss the effect of first person voice within the novel. Does it break up the narration of the novel when Lewis speaks in the first person at random intervals throughout?

Compare and contrast Mark's character with Jane's, given that they start with the same vice, pride, and end with the same solution, humility? How does each of these characters uniquely go about changing?

Discuss the connections between the aims of the N.I.C.E. with those of the people in the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel found in the book of Genesis, chapter 11.

Why do you think that Lewis chose to include the five planets/gods that he did? What other references to Roman mythology could he have made?

Compare and contrast the characters of MacPhee and Mr. Frost, given that both of these men favor objectivity over many other attributes.

Why do you think that Ransom is associated with the color blue (his room is blue and his robe is blue)? What is this color's significance?

Discuss the role of manipulation in this novel on both a personal and a public level.