

THIS FREEDOM

By

A. S. M. HUTCHINSON

Author of "If Winter Comes," etc.

MR. HUTCHINSON'S new novel, to the writing of which he has given two years, deals with the very much changed and still changing conditions of home life, of married life, of social life, and particularly with the way in which these changed conditions are affecting ideas about parenthood, affecting the lives of children. The title of the book is taken from the Scriptures: "With a great sum obtained I this freedom." Can a married woman have a business career and still do her duty by her husband and her children? That is the theme of this great novel, which will undoubtedly be as much discussed as Mr. Hutchinson's phenomenally successful story, "If Winter Comes."

Professor William Lyon Phelps says:

"Mr. Hutchinson's new novel, 'This Freedom,' grapples resolutely with one of the greatest social problems of our time, and his solution is the only possible solution — the one given nearly two thousand years ago in Palestine. The novel is filled with vivid persons, and there are passages here and there so notable as to place Mr. Hutchinson among the foremost novelists of our time."

Heloise E. Hersey says:

"The book is a great piece of work . . . I prophesy a great sale . . . Let those who will know the truth as to the future task of women read this book. Let those who will save women from the dangers of 'This Freedom' read it again and yet again."

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By A. S. M. HUTCHINSON

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“With a great sum obtained I this freedom.”
—ACTS xxii, 28.

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PART ONE — HOUSE OF MEN

CHAPTER I

Rosalie's earliest apprehension of the world was of a mysterious and extraordinary world that revolved entirely about her father and that entirely and completely belonged to her father. Under her father, all males had proprietary rights in the world and dominion over it; no females owned any part of the world or could do anything with it. All the males in this world—her father, and Robert and Harold her brothers, and all the other boys and men one sometimes saw—did mysterious and extraordinary things; and all the females in this world—her mother, and Anna and Flora and Hilda her sisters, and Ellen the cook and Gertrude the maid—did ordinary and unexciting and generally rather tiresome things. All the males were like story books to Rosalie: you never knew what they were going to do next; and all the females were like lesson books: they just went on and on and on.

Rosalie always stared at men when she saw them. Extraordinary and wonderful creatures who could do what they liked and were always doing mysterious and wonderful things, especially and above all her father.

Being with her father was like being with a magician or like watching a conjuror on the stage. You never knew what he was going to do next.

Whatever he suddenly did was never surprising in the sense of being startling, for (this cannot be emphasised too much) nothing her father did was ever surprising to Rosalie; but it was surprising in the sense of being absorbingly wonderful and enthralling. Even better than reading when she first began to read, and far better than anything in the world before the mysteries in books were discoverable, Rosalie liked to sit and stare at her father and think how wonderful he was and wonder what extraordinary thing he would do next. Everything belonged to him. The whole of life was ordered with a view to what he would think about it. The whole of life was continually thrown off its balance and whirled into the most entrancing convulsions by sudden activities of this most wonderful man.

Entrancing convulsions! Wonderful, wonderful father with a bull after him! Why, that was her very earliest recollection of him! That showed you how wonderful he was! Father, seen for the first time (as it were) flying before a bull! Bounding wildly across a field towards her with a bull after him! Wonderful father! Did her mother ever rush along in front of a bull? Never. Was it possible to imagine any of the women she knew rushing before a bull? It was not possible. To see a woman rushing before a bull would have alarmed Rosalie for she would have felt it was unnatural; but for her father to be bounding wildly along in front of a bull seemed to her perfectly natural and ordinary and she was not in the least alarmed; only, as always, enthralled.

Her father, while Rosalie watched him, was not in great danger. He came ballooning along towards Rosalie, not running as ordinarily fit and efficient men run, but progressing by a series of enormous leaps and bounds, arms and legs spread-eagling, and at each leap and bound always seeming to Rosalie to spring as high in the air as he sprung forward over the ground. It would not have surprised Rosalie, who was then about four, to see one of these stupendous leaps continue in a whirling flight through mid-air and her father come hurtling over the gate and drop with an enormous plunk at her feet like a huge dead bird, as a partridge once had come plunk over the hedge and out of the sky when she was in a lane adjacent to a shooting party. It would not have surprised her in the least. Nothing her father did ever surprised Rosalie. The world was his and the fulness thereof, and he did what he liked with it.

Arrived, however, from the bull, not as a ballooning bird out of the sky, but as a headlong avalanche over the gate, Rosalie's father tottered to a felled tree

trunk, and sat there heaving, and groaned aloud, “Infernal parish; hateful parish; forsaken parish!”

Rosalie, wonderingly regarding him, said, “Mother says dinner is waiting for you, father.”

Her mother and her sisters and the servants and the entire female establishment of the universe seemed to Rosalie always to be waiting for something from her father, or for her father himself, or waiting for or upon some male other than her father. That was another of the leading principles that Rosalie first came to know in her world. Not only were the males, paramourly her father, able to do what they liked and always doing wonderful and mysterious things, but everything that the females did either had some relation to a male or was directly for, about, or on behalf of a male.

Getting Robert off to school in the morning, for instance. That was another early picture.

There would be Robert, eating; and there was the entire female population of the rectory feverishly attending upon Robert while he ate. Six females, intensely and as if their lives depended upon it, occupied with one male. Three girls—Anna about sixteen, Flora fourteen, Hilda twelve—and three grown women, all exhaustingly occupied in pushing out of the house one heavy and obstinate male aged about ten! Rosalie used to stand and watch entranced. How wonderful he was! Where did he go to when at last he was pushed off? What happened to him? What did he do?

There he is, eating; there they are, ministering. Entrancing and mysterious spectacle!

Robert, very solid and heavy and very heated and agitated, would be seated at the table shoving porridge into himself against the clock. One of his legs, unnaturally flexed backward and outward, is in the possession of Rosalie’s mother who is on her knees mending a hole in his stocking. The other leg, similarly contorted, is on the lap of Ellen the cook, who with very violent tugs, as if she were lashing a box, is lacing a boot on to it. Behind Robert is Anna, who is pressing his head down with one hand and washing the back of his neck with the other. In front of him across the table is Hilda, staring before her with bemused eyes and moving lips and rapidly counting on drumming fingers. Hilda is doing his sums for him. Beside him on his right

side, apparently engaged in throttling him, is Gertrude the maid. Gertrude the maid is trying to tear off him a grimed collar and put on him a clean collar. Facing Gertrude on his other side is Flora. Flora is bawling his history in his ear.

Everybody is working for Robert; everybody is working at top speed for him, and everybody is loudly soliciting his attention.

“Oh, do give over wriggling, master Robert!” (The boot-fastener.)

“‘Simon de Montford, Hubert de Burgh, and Peter de Roche.’ Well, say it then, you dreadful little idiot!” (The history crammer.)

“Oh, master Robert, do please keep up!” (The collar fastener.)

“Keep down, will you!” (The neck washer.)

“Four sixes are twenty-four and six you carried thirty!” (The arithmetician.)

“Robert, you must turn your foot further round!” (The stocking-darner.)

“‘The Barons were now incensed. The Barons were now incensed. The Barons were now incensed.’ Say it, you ghastly little stupid!”

“Do they make you do these by fractions or by decimals?... Well, what do you know, then?”

Entrancing spectacle!

Now the discovery is by everybody simultaneously made and simultaneously announced that Robert is already later in starting than he has ever been (he always was) and immediately Rosalie would become witness of the last and most violent skirmish in this devoted attendance. Everybody rushes around hunting for things and pushing them on to Robert and pushing Robert, festooned with them, towards the door. Where was his cap? Where was his satchel? Where was his lunch? Where were his books? Who had seen his atlas? Who had seen his pencil box? Who had seen his gymnasium belt? Was his bicycle ready? Was his coat on his bicycle? Was that button on his coat?

With these alarums at their height and the excursions attendant on them at their busiest, another splendid male would enter the room and immediately there was, as Rosalie always saw, a transference of attendance to him and a violent altercation between him and the first splendid male. This new splendid male is Rosalie’s other brother, Harold. Harold was eighteen and

him also the entire female population of the rectory combined to push out of the rectory every morning. Harold was due to be pushed off half an hour later than Robert, and as he was a greater and more splendid male than Robert (though infinitely lesser than her father) so the place to which he was pushed off was far more mysterious and enthralling than the place to which Robert was pushed off. A school Rosalie could dimly understand. But a bank! Why Harold should go to sit on a bank all day, and why he should ride on a bicycle to Ashborough to find a bank when there were banks all around the rectory, and even in the garden itself, Rosalie never could imagine. Mysterious Harold! Anna had told her that men kept money in banks; but Rosalie had never found money in a bank though she had looked; yet banks—of all extraordinary places—were where men chose to put their money! Mysterious men! And Harold could find these banks and find this money though he never took a trowel or a spade and was always shingly clean with a very high collar and very long cuffs. Wonderful, wonderful Harold!

Robert was due to be pushed off half an hour before Harold was due to be pushed off, but he never was; the two splendid creatures always clashed and there was always between them, because they clashed, a violent scene which Rosalie would not have missed for worlds. A meeting of two males, so utterly unlike a meeting of two females, was invariably of the most entrancingly noisy or violent description. When ladies came to the rectory to see her mother they sat in the drawing-room and sipped tea and spoke in thin voices; but when men came to see her father and went into the study, there was very loud talking and often a row. Yes, and once in the village street, Rosalie had seen two men stand up and thump one another with their fists and fall down and get up and thump again. When two women, her sisters or others, quarrelled, they only shrilled, and went on and on shrilling. It was impossible to imagine the collision of two women producing anything so exciting and splendid as invariably was produced by the collision of two males.

As now——

In comes Harold in great heat and hurry (as men always were) with his splendid button boots in one hand and an immense pair of shining cuffs in the other hand.

“Haven’t you gone yet, you lazy young brute?”

“No, I haven’t, you lazy old brute!”

Agitated feminine cries of “Robert! Robert! You are not to speak to Harold like that.”

“Well, he spoke to me like that.”

“Yes, and I’ll do a jolly sight more than speak to you in a minute if you don’t get out of it. Get out of it, do you hear?”

“Shan’t!”

“Robert! Robert! Harold! Harold!”

“Well, get him out of it, or he’ll be sorry for it. Why is he always here when I’m supposed to be having my breakfast? Not a thing ready, as usual. Look here, where I’m supposed to sit—flannel and soap! That’s washing his filthy neck, I suppose. Filthy young brute! Why don’t you wash your neck, pig?”

“Why do you wear girl’s boots with buttons, pig?”

Commotion. Enthralling commotion. Half the female assemblage hustle the splendid creature Robert out of the door and down the hall and on to his bicycle; half the female assemblage cover his retreat and block the dash after him of the still more splendid Harold; all the female assemblage, battle having been prevented and one splendid male despatched, combine to minister to the requirements of the second splendid male now demanding attention.

Busy scene. Enthralling spectacle. There he is, eating; shoving sausages into himself against the clock just as Robert had shovelled porridge into himself against the clock. One ministrant is sewing a button on to his boot, another with blotting paper and hot iron is removing a stain from his coat, divested for the purpose; one is pouring out his coffee, another is cutting his bread, a third is watching for his newspaper by the postman. And suddenly he whirls everything into a whirlpool just as men, if Rosalie watches them long enough, always whirl everything into a whirlpool.

“Oh, my goodness, the pump!”

Chorus, “The pump?”

“The bicycle pump! Has that young brute taken the bicycle pump?”

“Yes, he took it. I saw it.”

Commotion.

“Catch him across the field! Catch him across the field! Where are my boots? Where the devil are my boots? Well, never mind the infernal button. How am I going to get to the bank with a flat tyre? Can’t some one catch him across the field instead of all standing there staring?”

Away they go! Rosalie, seeking a good place for the glorious spectacle, is knocked over in the stampede for the door. Nobody minds Rosalie. Rosalie doesn’t mind—anything to see this entrancing sight! Away they go, flying over the meadow, shouting, scrambling, falling. Out after them plunges Harold, shirt-sleeved, one boot half on, hobbling, leaping, bawling. Glorious to watch him! He outruns them all; he outbellows them all. Of course he does. He is a man. He is one of those splendid, wonderful, mysterious creatures to whom, subject only to Rosalie’s father, the entire world belongs. Look at him, bounding, bawling! Wonderful, wonderful Harold!

But Robert is wonderful too. If it had been Anna or Flora or Hilda gone off with the pump, she would have been easily caught. Not Robert. Wonderful and mysterious Robert, wonderfully and mysteriously pedalling at incredible speed, is not caught. The hunt dejectedly trails back. The business of pushing Harold out of the house is devotedly resumed.

And again—enthraling spectacle—just as the reign of Robert was terminated by the accession of Harold, so the dominion of Harold is overthrown by the accession of father. Harold is crowded about with ministrants. Nobody can leave him for a minute. Rosalie’s father appears. Everybody leaves Harold simultaneously, abruptly, and as if by magic. Rosalie’s father appears. Everybody disappears. Wonderful father! Everybody melts away: but Harold does not melt away. Courageous Harold! Everybody melts; only Harold is left, and Rosalie watching; and immediately, as always, the magnificent males clash with sound and fury.

Rosalie’s father scowls upon Harold and delivers his morning greeting. No “Good morning, dear,” as her mother would have said. “Aren’t you gone yet?” like a bark from a kennel.

“Just going.”

Wonderful father! A moment before there had been not the remotest sign of Harold ever going. Now Harold is very anxious to go. He is very anxious to go but, like Robert, he will not abandon the field without defiance of the authority next above his own. While he collects his things he whistles. Rosalie shudders (but deliciously as one in old Rome watching the gladiators).

“Do you see the clock, sir?”

“Yes.”

“Well, quicken yourself, sir. Quicken yourself.”

“The clock’s fast.”

“It is not fast, sir. And let me add that the clock with which you could keep time of a morning, or of any hour in the day, would have to be an uncommonly slow clock.”

Harold with elaborate unconcern adjusts his trouser clips. “I should have thought that was more a matter for the Bank to complain of, if necessary. I may be wrong, of course——”

“You may be wrong, sir, because in my experience you almost invariably are wrong and never more so than when you lad-di-dah that you are right. You may be wrong, but let me tell you what you may not be. You may not be impertinent to me, sir. You may not lad-di-dah me, sir.”

“Father, I really do not see why at my age I should be hounded out of the house like this every morning.”

“You are hounded out, as you elegantly express it, because morning after morning, owing to your disgustingly slothful habits, you clash with me, sir. My breakfast is delayed because you clash with me, and the house is delayed because you clash with me, and the whole parish is delayed because you clash with me.”

“Perhaps you’re not aware that Robert clashes with me.”

“Dash Robert! Are you going or are you not going?”

He goes.

“Bring back the paper.”

He brings it back.

Wonderful father!

Rosalie's father gives a tug at the bell cord that would have dislocated the neck of a horse. The cord comes away in his hand. He hurls it across the room.

Glorious father!

There was a most frightful storm one night and Rosalie, in Anna's bed with Flora crowded in also and Hilda shivering in her nightgown beside them, too young to be frightened but with her sister's fright beginning to communicate itself to her, said, "Ask father to go and stop it."

"Fool!" cried Flora. "How could father stop the storm?"

Why not?

CHAPTER II

Flora's sharp and astounding reply to that question of Rosalie's was recalled by Rosalie, with hurt surprise at Flora's sharpness and ignorance, when, shortly afterwards, she found in a book a man who could, and actually did, stop a storm. This was a man called Prospero in a book called "The Tempest."

She was never—that Rosalie—the conventional wonder-child of fiction who reads before ten all that its author probably never read before thirty; but she could read when she was six and she read widely and curiously, choosing her entertainment, from her father's bookshelves, solely by the method of reading every book that had pictures.

There was but one picture to "The Tempest," a frontispiece, but it sufficed, and at the period when Rosalie believed the ownership of the world to be vested in her father and under him in all males, "The Tempest," because it reflected that condition, was the greatest joy of all the joys the bookshelves discovered to her. She read it over and over again. It presented life exactly as life presented itself to the round eyes of Rosalie: all males doing always noisy and violent and important and enthralling things, with Prospero, her father, by far the most important of all; and women scarcely appearing and doing only what the men told them to do. Miranda's appearances in the story were indifferently skipped by Rosalie; the noisy action and language in the wreck, and the noisy action and language of the drunkards in the wood were what she liked, and all the magic arts of Prospero were what she thoroughly

appreciated and understood. That was life as she knew it.

Rosalie's father, when Rosalie thought the world belonged to him and revolved about him, was tall and cleanshaven and of complexion a dark and burning red. When he was excited or angry his face used to burn as the embers in the study fire burned when Rosalie pressed the bellows against them. He had thick black eyebrows and a most powerful nose. His nose jutted from his face like a projection from a cliff beneath a clump of bushes. He had been at Cambridge and he was most ferociously fond of Cambridge. One of the most fearful scenes Rosalie ever witnessed was on one boat-race day when Harold appeared with a piece of Oxford ribbon in his buttonhole. It was at breakfast, the family for some reason or other most unusually all taking breakfast together. Rosalie's father first jocularly bantered Harold on his choice of colour, and everybody—anxious as always to please and placate the owner of the world—laughed with father against Harold. But Harold did not laugh. Harold smouldered resentment and defiance, and out of his smouldering began to maintain "from what chaps had said" that Oxford was altogether and in every way a much better place than Cambridge. In every branch of athletics there were better athletes, growled Harold, at Oxford.

Rosalie has been watching the embers in her father's face glowing to dark-red heat. Everybody had been watching them except Harold who, though addressing his father, had been mumbling "what chaps had said" to his plate.

"Athletes!" cried Rosalie's father suddenly in a very terrible voice. "Athletes! And what about scholars, sir?"

Harold informed his plate that he wasn't talking about scholars.

Rosalie's father raised a marmalade jar and thumped it down upon the table so that it cracked. "Then what the dickens right have you to talk at all, sir? How dare you try to compare Oxford with Cambridge when you know no more about either than you know of Jupiter or Mars? Athletes!" He went off into record of University contests, cricket scores, running times, football scores, as if his whole life had been devoted to collecting them. They all showed Cambridge first and Oxford beaten and he hurled each one at Harold's head with a thundering, "What about that, sir?" after it. He leapt to scholarship and reeled off scholarships and scholars and schools, and professors and endowments and prize men, as if he had been an educational

year-book gifted with speech and with particularly loud and violent speech. He spoke of the colleges of Cambridge, and with every college and every particular glory of every college demanded of the unfortunate Harold, "What have you got in Oxford against that, sir?"

It was awful. It was far more frightening than the night of the storm. Nobody ate. Nobody drank. Everybody shuddered and tried by every means to avoid catching father's rolling eye and thereby attracting the direct blast of the tempest. Rosalie, who of course, being a completely negligible quantity in the rectory, is not included in the everybody, simply stared, more awed and enthralled than ever before. And with much reason. As he declaimed of the glories of the colleges of Cambridge there was perceptible in her father's voice a most curious crack or break. It became more noticeable and more frequent. He suddenly and most astoundingly cried out, "Cambridge! Cambridge!" and threw his arms out before him on the table, and buried his head on them, and sobbed out, "Cambridge! My youth! My youth! My God, my God, my youth!"

Somehow or other they all slipped out of the room and left him there,—all except Rosalie who remained in her high chair staring upon her father, and upon his shoulders that heaved up and down, and upon the coffee from an overturned cup that oozed slowly along the tablecloth.

Extraordinary father!

Rosalie's father had been a wrangler and one of the brilliant men of his year at Cambridge. All manner of brilliance was expected for him and of him. He unexpectedly went into the Church and as unexpectedly married.

His bride was the daughter of a clergyman, a widower, who kept a small private school in Devonshire. She helped her father to run the school (an impoverished business which, begun exclusively for the "sons of gentlemen," had slid down into paying court to tradesmen in order to get the sons of tradesmen) and she maintained him in the very indifferent health he suffered. Harold Aubyn, the brilliant wrangler with the brilliant future, who had begun his brilliance by unexpectedly entering the Church, and continued it by unexpectedly marrying while on a holiday in the little Devonshire town where he had gone to ponder his future (a little unbalanced by the unpremeditated plunge into Holy Orders) further continued his brilliance by

unexpectedly finding himself the assistant master in his father-in-law's second-rate and failing school. The daughter would not leave her father; the suitor would not leave his darling; the brilliant young wrangler who at Cambridge used to dream of waking to find himself famous awoke instead to find himself six years buried in a now third-rate and moribund school in a moribund Devonshire town. He had a father-in-law now permanent invalid, bedridden. He had four children and another, Robert, on the way.

It was his father-in-law's death that awoke him; and he awoke characteristically. The old man dead! Come, that was one burden lifted, one shackle removed! The school finally went smash at the same time. Never mind! Another burden gone! Another shackle lifted! Dash the school! How he hated the school! How he loathed and detested the lumping boys! How he loathed and abominated teaching them simple arithmetic (he the wrangler!) and history that was a string of dates, and geography that was a string of capes and bays, and Latin as far as the conjugations (he the wrangler!) how he loathed and abominated it! Now a fresh start! Hurrah!

That was like Rosalie's father—in those days. That way blew the cold fit and the hot fit—then.

The magnificent fresh start after the magnificent escape from the morass of the moribund father-in-law and the moribund school and the moribund Devonshire town proved to be but a stagger down into morass heavier and more devastating of ambition. He always jumped blindly and wildly into things. Blindly and wildly into the Church, blindly and wildly into marriage, blindly and wildly into the school, blindly and wildly, one might say, into fatherhood on a lavish scale. Blindly and wildly—the magnificent fresh start—into the rectory in which Rosalie was born.

It was “a bit in the wilds” (of Suffolk); “a bit of a tight fit” (L200 a year) and a bit or two or three other drawbacks; but it was thousands of miles from Devonshire and from the school and schooling, that was the great thing; and it was a jolly big rectory with a ripping big garden; and above all and beyond everything it was just going to be a jumping-off place while he looked around for something suitable to his talents and while he got in touch again with his old friends of the brilliant years.

It was just going to be a jumping-off place, but he never jumped off from it; a

place from which to look around for something suitable, but instead he sunk in it up to his chin; a place from which to get in touch again with his friends of the brilliant years, but his friends were all doing brilliant things and much too busy at their brilliance to open up with one who had missed fire.

The parish of St. Mary's, Ibbotsfield, had an enormous rectory, falling to pieces; an enormous church, crumbling away; an enormous area, purely agricultural; and a cure of a very few hundred agricultural souls, enormously-scattered. Years and years before, prior to railways, prior to mechanical reapers and thrashers, and prior to everything that took men to cities or whirled them and their produce farther in an hour than they ever could have gone in a week, Ibbotsfield and its surrounding villages and hamlets were a reproach to the moral conditions of the day in that they had no sufficiently enormous church. Well-intentioned persons removed this reproach, adding in their zeal an enormous rectory; and the time they chose for their beneficent and lavish action was precisely the time when Ibbotsfield, through its principal land-owners, was stoutly rejecting the monstrous idea of encouraging a stinking, roaring, dangerous railway in their direction, and combining together by all means in their power to keep the roaring, dangerous atrocity as far away from them as possible.

It thus, and by like influences, happened that, whereas one generation of the devoutly intentioned sat stolidly under the reproach of an enormous and thickly populated area without a church, later generations with the same stolidity sat under the reproach of an enormous church, an enormous rectory and an infinitesimal stipend, in an area which a man might walk all day without meeting any other man.

But the devout of the day, not having to live in this rectory or preach in this church or laboriously trudge about this area, did not unduly worry themselves with this reproach.

That was (in his turn) the lookout of the Rev. Harold Aubyn—also his outlook.

He is to be imagined, in those days when Rosalie first came to know him and to think of him as Prospero, as a terribly lonely man. He stalked fatiguingly about the countryside in search of his parishioners, and his parishioners were suspicious of him and disliked his fierce, thrusting nose, and he returned from

them embittered with them and hating them. He genuinely longed to be friendly with them and on terms of Hail, fellow, well met, with them; but they exasperated him because they could not meet him either on his own quick intellectual level or upon his own quick and very sensitive emotional level. They could not respond to his humour and they could not respond, in the way he thought they ought to respond, to his sympathy.

He once found a man—a farm labourer—who in conversation disclosed a surprising interest in the traces of early and mediaeval habitation of the country. The discovery delighted him. In the catalogue of a secondhand bookseller of Ipswich he noticed the “Excursions in the County of Suffolk,” two volumes for three shillings, and he wrote and had them posted to the man. For days he eagerly looked in the post for the grateful and

delighted letter that in similar circumstances he himself would have written. He composed in his mind the phrases of the letter and warmed in spirit over anticipation of reading them. No letter arrived.

When he came into the rectory from visiting he was always asking, “Has that man Bolas from Hailsham called?” Bolas never called. He furiously began to loathe Bolas. He was furious with himself for having “lowered himself” to Bolas. Bolas in his ignorance no doubt thought the books were a cheap charity of cast-off lumber. Uncouth clod! Stupid clod! Uncouth parish! Hateful, loathsome parish! For weeks he kept away from Hailsham and the possible vicinity of Bolas. One day he met him. Bolas passed with no more than a “Good day, Mr. Aubyn.” He could have killed the man. He swung round and pushed his dark face and jutting nose into the face of Bolas. “Did you ever get some books I sent you?”

“Ou, ay, to be sure, they books——”

He rushed with savage strides away from the man. All the way home he savagely said to himself, aloud, keeping time to it with his feet, “Uncouth clod, ill-mannered clod, horrible, hateful place! Uncouth clods, hateful clods, horrible, hateful place!”

That was his attitude to his parishioners. They could not come up to the level of his sensibilities; he could not get down to the level of theirs.

With the few gentle families that composed the society of Ibbotsfield he was little better accommodated. They led contented, well-ordered lives, busy about their gardens, busy about their duties, busy about their amusements. His life was ill-ordered and he was never busy about anything: he was always either neglecting what had to be done or doing it, late, with a ferocious and exhausting energy that caused him to groan over it and detest it while he did it. In the general level of his life he was below the standard of his neighbours and knew that he was below it; in the sudden bounds and flights of his intellect and of his imagination he was immeasurably above the intellects of his neighbours and knew that he was immeasurably above them. Therefore, and in both moods, he commonly hated and despised them. "Fools, fools! Unread, pompous, petty!"

At the rectory, among his family, he seemed to himself to be surrounded by incompetent women and herds of children.

He was a terribly lonely man when Rosalie first came to know him and thought of him as Prospero. He is to be imagined in those days as a fierce, flying, futile figure scudding about on the face of the parish and in the vast gaunt spaces of the rectory, with his burning face and his jutting nose, trying to get away from people, hungering to meet sympathetic people; trying to get away from himself, hungering after the things that his self had lost. In his young manhood he was known for moods of intense reserve alternated by fits of tremendous gaiety and boisterous high spirits. ("A fresh start! Hurrah!" when release from the school came. "What does anything matter? Now we're really off at last! Hurrah! Hurrah!") In his set manhood, when Rosalie knew him, there were substituted for the fits of boisterous spirits, paroxysms of violent outburst against his lot. "Infernal parish! Hateful parish! Forsaken parish!" after the ignominy of flight before the bull. "Blow the dinner! Dash the dinner! Blow the dinner!" after wrestling a soggy steak from his pocket and hurling it half a mile through the air. These and that single but terrible occasion of "Cambridge! Cambridge! My youth! My God, my God, my youth!"

A terribly lonely man.
