

Dear fellow pilgrims,

Last week we revisited the end of Chapter 2 of *That Hideous Strength*, where Mark and Jane Studdock are heading in different directions to very different destinations--Mark in Lord Feverstone's sports car speeding to the N.I.C.E. at Belbury, and Jane on a slow train making its way through the bucolic countryside to St. Anne's-on-the-Hill. We unpacked some of the marvelous symbolism hidden in these journeys and outlined the action at the beginning of Chapter 3. This week, we will journey further into Chapter 3 and the nefarious world of the N.I.C.E.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone for class tomorrow evening at 7 p.m. in the St. Philip's Parish Hall as the action in the book starts heating up!

Below is the link for distance learners for class tomorrow:

The class will livestream at 7 p.m. EDT as a Zoom Webinar (slightly different format than before). Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85371569825>

At the end of this email is an outline of what we covered last time, along with links to video and audio recordings of the class, the PowerPoint, and the handouts.

Hope you can be with us tomorrow evening--come and bring a friend!

Further up and further in,

Brian+

Video class link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1s4Eyc39c>

Music link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3R4CziFL1mA>

Podcast link: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/episode-13/id1587350461?i=1000548487575>

Church website link: <https://www.stphilipchurchsc.org/not-as-unwise-but-as-wise/episode/2022-01-19/episode-13>

Episode 13: Not as Unwise but as Wise: Reflections from C.S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man* and *That Hideous Strength*

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3, "BELBURY AND ST. ANNE'S-ON-THE-HILL"

Upon arriving at Belbury, the Headquarters of the N.I.C.E., Lord Feverstone takes Mark to meet John Wither, the Deputy Director of the N.I.C.E., who exemplifies the mastery of double-speak (and Lewis's fondness for using names to convey meaning). He speaks many words but without really saying anything at all, or he says one thing while meaning another. He praises Mark effusively (while at the same time not really seeming to know who he is) and repeatedly reassures Mark that he has nothing to worry about at all. Mark simply wants to know what his job would be if he came to the N.I.C.E. but can never get a direct answer out of Wither, and wonders throughout the interview, "What are we talking about?"

Afterward, Mark is unclear whether or not he has been offered a job. He tries to ask Lord Feverstone, who rudely abandons Mark and goes off with other staff. Meanwhile, it is clear that lunch is being served in the dining room, but

Mark is anxious and alone and not sure whether to enter. He spots William Hingest, a prominent chemist at Bracton, also known as Bill the Blizzard, and is relieved to have someone to talk to. However, Hingest says right away that he is leaving the N.I.C.E. and advises Mark to do the same. Mark is torn and confused when he is introduced to Steele and Cosser, who direct the work of the N.I.C.E. in Mark's discipline of sociology, and they say they know nothing about his appointment and they don't need him. A famous physiologist, Professor Filostrato, recognizes Mark. He advises Mark to stay and not worry about a job description or about Steele and Cosser. Filostrato says that all will become apparent and that the work of the N.I.C.E. is what's important - too important to pass up. He advises that the only two people in the N.I.C.E. Mark needs to pay attention to are Wither, the Deputy Director, and "Fairy" Hardcastle, the head of the internal N.I.C.E. police. The "Fairy" is "a big woman in a black, short-skirted uniform."

Meanwhile, Jane is admitted through the gate to St. Anne's-on-the-Hill, and meets Grace Ironwood, the person the Dimbles wanted her to see about her dreams. Miss Ironwood dresses all in black with her hands folded on her knees, just as she had appeared in Jane's dream the night before. Ironwood reassures Jane that her dreams are not an indication that she is mentally ill but rather that she is a visionary, who sees things in dreams as they happen or before they happen. Jane's maiden name was Tudor, and Ironwood explains that several of Jane's ancestors in this family had the same gift. Ironwood urges Jane to use her gift in service of the company at St. Anne's, as recommended by the Dimbles, and warns Jane that there are others wanting to use her gift for subversive purposes and evil. Jane is almost convinced, but then her pride and wounded vanity and dislike of mystery and circumstances beyond her control cause her to rebel and to flee, saying she wants nothing more to do with Ironwood or the Company.

A Journey Rich in Symbolism

"An observer placed at the right altitude above Edgestow that day might have seen far to the south a moving spot on a main road and later, to the east, much nearer the silver thread of the Wynd, and much more slowly moving, the smoke of a train. The spot would have been the car which was carrying Mark Studdock towards the Blood Transfusion Office at Belbury, where the nucleus of the N.I.C.E. had taken up its temporary abode. The very size and style of the car had made a favourable impression on him the moment he saw it... all spoke of a big man driving a big car to somewhere where they would find big stuff going on. And he, Mark, was to be in it all..."

"Here, as at Woolham and Cure Hardy and Fourstones, the train settled back, when it stopped, with a little jerk and something like a sigh. And then there would be a noise of milk cans rolling and coarse boots treading on the platform and after that a pause which seemed to last long, during which the autumn sunlight grew warm on the window pane and smells of wood and field from beyond the tiny station floated in and seemed to claim the railway as parts of the land. Passengers got in and out of her carriage at every stop; applefaced men, and women with elastic — side boots and imitation fruit on their hats, and schoolboys. Jane hardly noticed them: for though she was theoretically an extreme democrat, no social class save her own had yet become a reality to her in any place except the printed page."

"And in between the stations things flitted past, so isolated from their context that each seemed to promise some unearthly happiness if one could but have descended from the train at that very moment to seize it: a house backed with a group of haystacks and wide brown fields about it, two aged horses standing head to tail, a little orchard with washing hanging on a line, and a rabbit staring at the train, whose two eyes looked like the dots, and his ears like the uprights, of a double exclamation mark. At quarterpast two she came to St. Anne's, which was the real terminus of the branch, and the end of everything. The air struck her as cold and tonic when she left the station. Although the train had been chugging and wheezing up-hill for the latter half of her journey, there was still a climb to be done on foot, for St. Anne's is one of those villages perched on a hilltop which are commoner in Ireland than in England, and the station is some way from the village. A winding road between high banks led her up to it. As soon as she had passed the church she turned left, as she had been instructed, at the Saxon Cross. There were no houses on her left — only a row of beech trees and unfenced ploughland falling steeply away, and beyond that the timbered midland plain spreading as far as she could see and blue in the distance. She was on the highest ground in all that region. Presently, she came to a high wall on her right that seemed to run on for a great way: there was a door in it and beside the door an old iron bell-pull."

Some Thoughts on What Lewis Is Doing Here

- the sportscar v. the train: who is in control and where can you go?
- the fast car heading to destruction and the slow train heading to redemption
- Saint Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary, and patron saint of mothers
- role of people and surroundings: to be endured as obstacles and run over without thought, or to be regarded deliberately and appreciated for their beauty and story that they tell?
- significance of names: Woolham (ancient Saxon family whose motto is "I Will Defend My God"), Cure Hardy (a son of King Arthur in Malory's tale), Fourstones (site of Baden-Powell's first scout camp; Boy Scouts were notoriously banned by Hitler as "subversive to the State")
- Mark is desperate to get into Belbury and the N.I.C.E.; Jane is desperate to stay out of the Company of St. Anne's

Significant quotations:

- "big man driving a big car to somewhere where they would find big stuff going on"—pride goes before a fall
- "the autumn sunlight grew warm on the window pane and smells of wood and field from beyond the tiny station floated in and seemed to claim the railway as parts of the land"—Beauty in God's creation as redemptive
- "each seemed to promise some unearthly happiness if one could but have descended from the train...to seize it: a house backed with a group of haystacks and wide brown fields about it, two aged horses standing head to tail, a little orchard with washing hanging on a line, and a rabbit staring at the train, whose two eyes looked like the dots, and his ears like the uprights, of a double exclamation mark"—unearthly happiness—spiritual joy from Beauty in creation if we will but notice--"she came to St. Anne's, which was the real terminus of the branch, and the end of everything. The air struck her as cold and tonic when she left the station"—the Terminus and End of everything, cold tonic air (Norse)
- "As soon as she had passed the church she turned left, as she had been instructed, at the Saxon Cross."—a church and a cross are in her path; Saxon cross often at location of a monastery
- "She was on the highest ground in all that region."—high ground, holy mountain
- "Presently, she came to a high wall on her right that seemed to run on for a great way: there was a door in it and beside the door an old iron bell-pull."—the walled garden (Marian imagery) and the door (John 10:7)

THEMES IN THE FIRST SECTIONS OF CHAPTER 3

- Doublespeak is a characteristic of Evil and evildoers, and we go along with it or ignore it at our peril.
- Ceaseless, dog-eat-dog competition, flattery, and strife are rife at the N.I.C.E. (just like Screwtape!)
- Extraordinary spiritual gifts are real, but one must be very careful in using them and realize that the powers of darkness desire to corrupt them
- Pride and a strong need for control can cause us to miss the Will of God

Practices of Hope and of Wisdom

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.—Philippians 4:8-9

1. Embrace real pleasures that focus your heart and mind on Beauty, Truth, and Goodness. "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Ps. 16:11) Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:16-17) To bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. (Isaiah 61:3)

2.Be alert to your environment and the unseen spiritual forces at work around you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

3.Seek to discern when the presence of the Lord is surrounding you in your physical environment and live into that realization. “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” (Ex. 3:5) And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, “Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.” (Gen. 28:16-17)

4.Be alert to whom God is placing in your path. Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ. (Col. 4:2-3) But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. (1 Peter 3:15)

Yet Not I, But Through Christ in Me

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace
To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to His
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing, "All is mine"
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need, His power is displayed
To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley He will lead
Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven
The future sure, the price it has been paid
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
And He was raised to overthrow the grave
To this I hold, my sin has been defeated
Jesus now and ever is my plea
Oh the chains are released, I can sing, "I am free"
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

With every breath I long to follow Jesus
For He has said that He will bring me home
And day by day I know He will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne
To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

--Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson, Michael Farren--2018