





Coradella Collegiate Bookshelf Editions.

Women in Love.

D. H. Lawrence.

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Women in Love.

Chapter 1.

Sisters.

Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen sat one morning in the window-bay of their father's house in Beldover, working and talking. Ursula was stitching a piece of brightly-coloured embroidery, and Gudrun was drawing upon a board which she held on her knee. They were mostly silent, talking as their thoughts strayed through their minds.

'Ursula,' said Gudrun, 'don't you REALLY WANT to get married?' Ursula laid her embroidery in her lap and looked up. Her face was calm and considerate.

'I don't know,' she replied. 'It depends how you mean.'

NOTICE

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Gudrun was slightly taken aback. She watched her sister Please note that although the text of this ebook is in the public domain, for some moments.

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'Well,' she said, ironically, 'it usually means one thing! But COLLEGEBOOKSHELF.NET/COPYRIGHTS

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don't you think anyhow, you'd be—' she darkened slightly—

'In the abstract but not in the concrete,' said Ursula.

'in a better position than you are in now.'

'When it comes to the point, one isn't even tempted—oh, if I A shadow came over Ursula's face.

were tempted, I'd marry like a shot. I'm only tempted NOT

'I might,' she said. 'But I'm not sure.'

to.' The faces of both sisters suddenly lit up with amusement.

Again Gudrun paused, slightly irritated. She wanted to

'Isn't it an amazing thing,' cried Gudrun, 'how strong the be quite definite.

temptation is, not to!' They both laughed, looking at each

'You don't think one needs the EXPERIENCE of having other. In their hearts they were frightened.

been married?' she asked.

There was a long pause, whilst Ursula stitched and Gudrun

'Do you think it need BE an experience?' replied Ursula.

went on with her sketch. The sisters were women, Ursula

'Bound to be, in some way or other,' said Gudrun, coolly.

twenty-six, and Gudrun twenty-five. But both had the re-

'Possibly undesirable, but bound to be an experience of some mote, virgin look of modern girls, sisters of Artemis rather sort.'

than of Hebe. Gudrun was very beautiful, passive, soft-

'Not really,' said Ursula. 'More likely to be the end of ex-skinned, softlimbed. She wore a dress of dark-blue silky stuff, perience.'

with ruches of blue and green linen lace in the neck and sleeves; Gudrun sat very still, to attend to this.

and she had emerald-green stockings. Her look of confidence

'Of course,' she said, 'there's THAT to consider.' This and diffidence contrasted with Ursula's sensitive expectancy.

brought the conversation to a close. Gudrun, almost angrily, The provincial people, intimidated by Gudrun's perfect sang-took up her rubber and began to rub out part of her drawing.

froid and exclusive bareness of manner, said of her: 'She is a Ursula stitched absorbedly.

smart woman.' She had just come back from London, where

'You wouldn't consider a good offer?' asked Gudrun.

she had spent several years, working at an art-school, as a stu-

'I think I've rejected several,' said Ursula.

dent, and living a studio life.

'REALLY!' Gudrun flushed dark—'But anything really

'I was hoping now for a man to come along,' Gudrun said, worth while? Have you REALLY?'

suddenly catching her underlip between her teeth, and mak-

'A thousand a year, and an awfully nice man. I liked him ing a strange grimace, half sly smiling, half anguish. Ursula awfully,' said Ursula.

was afraid.

'Really! But weren't you fearfully tempted?'

'So you have come home, expecting him here?' she laughed.

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'Oh my dear,' cried Gudrun, strident, 'I wouldn't go out of

'Do you REALLY want children, Ursula?' she asked coldly.

my way to look for him. But if there did happen to come A dazzled, baffled look came on Ursula's face.

along a highly attractive individual of sufficient means—

'One feels it is still beyond one,' she said.

well—' she tailed off ironically. Then she looked searchingly

'DO you feel like that?' asked Gudrun. 'I get no feeling at Ursula, as if to probe her. 'Don't you find yourself getting whatever from the thought of bearing children.'

bored?' she asked of her sister. 'Don't you find, that things fail Gudrun looked at Ursula with a masklike, expressionless to materialise? NOTHING MATERIALISES! Everything face. Ursula knitted her brows.

withers in the bud.'

'Perhaps it isn't genuine,' she faltered. 'Perhaps one doesn't

'What withers in the bud?' asked Ursula.

really want them, in one's soul—only superficially.' A hard-

'Oh, everything—oneself—things in general.' There was a ness came over Gudrun's face. She did not want to be too pause, whilst each sister vaguely considered her fate.

definite.

'It does frighten one,' said Ursula, and again there was a

'When one thinks of other people's children—' said Ursula.

pause. 'But do you hope to get anywhere by just marrying?'

Again Gudrun looked at her sister, almost hostile.

'It seems to be the inevitable next step,' said Gudrun.

'Exactly,' she said, to close the conversation.

Ursula pondered this, with a little bitterness. She was a class The two sisters worked on in silence, Ursula having always mistress herself, in Willey Green Grammar School, as she that strange brightness of an essential flame that is caught, had been for some years.

meshed, contravened. She lived a good deal by herself, to her-

'I know,' she said, 'it seems like that when one thinks in self, working, passing on from day to day, and always think-the abstract. But really imagine it: imagine any man one knows, ing, trying to lay hold on life, to grasp it in her own under-imagine him coming home to one every evening, and saying standing. Her active living was suspended, but underneath, "Hello," and giving one a kiss—'

in the darkness, something was coming to pass. If only she There was a blank pause.

could break through the last integuments! She seemed to try

'Yes,' said Gudrun, in a narrowed voice. 'It's just impos-and put her hands out, like an infant in the womb, and she sible. The man makes it impossible.'

could not, not yet. Still she had a strange prescience, an inti-

'Of course there's children—' said Ursula doubtfully.

mation of something yet to come.

Gudrun's face hardened.

She laid down her work and looked at her sister. She thought

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Gudrun so CHARMING, so infinitely charming, in her soft-

'And how do you find home, now you have come back to ness and her fine, exquisite richness of texture and delicacy of it?' she asked.

line. There was a certain playfulness about her too, such a Gudrun paused for some moments, coldly, before answer-piquancy or ironic suggestion, such an untouched reserve.

ing. Then, in a cold truthful voice, she said: Ursula admired her with all her soul.

'I find myself completely out of it.'

'Why did you come home, Prune?' she asked.

'And father?'

Gudrun knew she was being admired. She sat back from Gudrun looked at Ursula, almost with resentment, as if her drawing and looked at Ursula, from under her finely-brought to bay.

curved lashes.

'I haven't thought about him: I've refrained,' she said coldly.

'Why did I come back, Ursula?' she repeated. 'I have asked

'Yes,' wavered Ursula; and the conversation was really at myself a thousand times.'

an end. The sisters found themselves confronted by a void, a

'And don't you know?'

terrifying chasm, as if they had looked over the edge.

'Yes, I think I do. I think my coming back home was just They worked on in silence for some time, Gudrun's cheek RECULER POUR MIEUX SAUTER.'

was flushed with repressed emotion. She resented its having And she looked with a long, slow look of knowledge at been called into being.

Ursula.

'Shall we go out and look at that wedding?' she asked at

'I know!' cried Ursula, looking slightly dazzled and falsi-length, in a voice that was too casual.

fied, and as if she did NOT know. 'But where can one jump

'Yes!' cried Ursula, too eagerly, throwing aside her sewing to?'

and leaping up, as if to escape something, thus betraying the

'Oh, it doesn't matter,' said Gudrun, somewhat superbly.

tension of the situation and causing a friction of dislike to go

'If one jumps over the edge, one is bound to land somewhere.'

over Gudrun's nerves.

'But isn't it very risky?' asked Ursula.

As she went upstairs, Ursula was aware of the house, of A slow mocking smile dawned on Gudrun's face.

her home round about her. And she loathed it, the sordid,

'Ah!' she said laughing. 'What is it all but words!' And so too-familiar place! She was afraid at the depth of her feeling again she closed the conversation. But Ursula was still brood-against the home, the milieu, the whole atmosphere and con-ing.

dition of this obsolete life. Her feeling frightened her.

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The two girls were soon walking swiftly down the main field. On the left was

a large landscape, a valley with collieries, road of Beldover, a wide street, part shops, part dwelling-and opposite hills with cornfields and woods, all blackened houses, utterly formless and sordid, without poverty. Gudrun, with distance, as if seen through a veil of crape. White and new from her life in Chelsea and Sussex, shrank cruelly from black smoke rose up in steady columns, magic within the dark this amorphous ugliness of a small colliery town in the Mid-air. Near at hand came the long rows of dwellings, approachlands. Yet forward she went, through the whole sordid gamut ing curved up the hill-slope, in straight lines along the brow of pettiness, the long amorphous, gritty street. She was ex-of the hill. They were of darkened red brick, brittle, with dark posed to every stare, she passed on through a stretch of tor-slate roofs. The path on which the sisters walked was black, ment. It was strange that she should have chosen to come trodden-in by the feet of the recurrent colliers, and bounded back and test the full effect of this shapeless, barren ugliness from the field by iron fences; the stile that led again into the upon herself. Why had she wanted to submit herself to it, road was rubbed shiny by the moleskins of the passing min-did she still want to submit herself to it, the insufferable tor-ers. Now the two girls were going between some rows of dwell-ture of these ugly, meaningless people, this defaced countryings, of the poorer sort. Women, their arms folded over their side? She felt like a beetle toiling in the dust. She was filled coarse aprons, standing gossiping at the end of their block, with repulsion.

stared after the Brangwen sisters with that long, unwearying They turned off the main road, past a black patch of com-stare of aborigines; children called out names.

mon-garden, where sooty cabbage stumps stood shameless.

Gudrun went on her way half dazed. If this were human No one thought to be ashamed. No one was ashamed of it all.

life, if these were human beings, living in a complete world,

'It is like a country in an underworld,' said Gudrun. 'The then what was her own world, outside? She was aware of her colliers bring it above-ground with them, shovel it up. Ursula, grass-green stockings, her large grass-green velour hat, her full it's marvellous, it's really marvellous—it's really wonderful, soft

coat, of a strong blue colour. And she felt as if she were another world. The people are all ghouls, and everything is treading in the air, quite unstable, her heart was contracted, as ghostly. Everything is a ghoulish replica of the real world, a if at any minute she might be precipitated to the ground. She replica, a ghoul, all soiled, everything sordid. It's like being was afraid.

mad, Ursula.'

She clung to Ursula, who, through long usage was inured The sisters were crossing a black path through a dark, soiled to this violation of a dark, uncreated, hostile world. But all

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the time her heart was crying, as if in the midst of some or-And she hung wavering in the road.

deal: 'I want to go back, I want to go away, I want not to

'Never mind them,' said Ursula, 'they're all right. They all know it, not to know that this exists.' Yet she must go for-know me, they don't matter.'

ward.

'But must we go through them?' asked Gudrun.

Ursula could feel her suffering.

'They're quite all right, really,' said Ursula, going forward.

'You hate this, don't you?' she asked.

And together the two sisters approached the group of uneasy,

'It bewilders me,' stammered Gudrun.

watchful common people. They were chiefly women, colliers'

'You won't stay long,' replied Ursula.

wives of the more shiftless sort. They had watchful, under-And Gudrun went along, grasping at release.

world faces.

They drew away from the colliery region, over the curve The two sisters held themselves tense, and went straight of the hill, into the purer country of the other side, towards towards the gate. The women made way for them, but barely Willey Green. Still the faint glamour of blackness persisted sufficient, as if grudging to yield ground. The sisters passed over the fields and the wooded hills, and seemed darkly to in silence through the stone gateway and up the steps, on the gleam in the air. It was a spring day, chill, with snatches of red carpet, a policeman estimating their progress.

sunshine. Yellow celandines showed out from the hedge-bot-

'What price the stockings!' said a voice at the back of toms, and in the cottage gardens of Willey Green, currant-Gudrun. A sudden fierce anger swept over the girl, violent bushes were breaking into leaf, and little flowers were coming and murderous. She would have liked them all annihilated, white on the grey alyssum that hung over the stone walls.

cleared away, so that the world was left clear for her. How she Turning, they passed down the highroad, that went behated walking up the churchyard path, along the red carpet, tween high banks towards the church. There, in the

lowest continuing in motion, in their sight.

bend of the road, low under the trees, stood a little group of

'I won't go into the church,' she said suddenly, with such expectant people, waiting to see the wedding. The daughter final decision that Ursula immediately halted, turned round, of the chief mine-owner of the district, Thomas Crich, was and branched off up a small side path which led to the little getting married to a naval officer.

private gate of the Grammar School, whose grounds adjoined

'Let us go back,' said Gudrun, swerving away. 'There are those of the church.

all those people.'

Just inside the gate of the school shrubbery, outside the

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churchyard, Ursula sat down for a moment on the low stone gay and excited because the sun was shining.

wall under the laurel bushes, to rest. Behind her, the large red Gudrun watched them closely, with objective curiosity. She building of the school

rose up peacefully, the windows all saw each one as a complete figure, like a character in a book, open for the holiday. Over the shrubs, before her, were the or a subject in a picture, or a marionette in a theatre, a fin-pale roofs and tower of the old church. The sisters were hid-ished creation. She loved to recognise their various character-den by the foliage.

istics, to place them in their true light, give them their own Gudrun sat down in silence. Her mouth was shut close, surroundings, settle them for ever as they passed before her her face averted. She was regretting bitterly that she had ever along the path to the church. She knew them, they were fin-come back. Ursula looked at her, and thought how amazingly ished, sealed and stamped and finished with, for her. There beautiful she was, flushed with discomfiture. But she caused was none that had anything unknown, unresolved, until the a constraint over Ursula's nature, a certain weariness. Ursula Criches themselves began to appear. Then her interest was wished to be alone, freed from the tightness, the enclosure of piqued. Here was something not quite so preconcluded.

Gudrun's presence.

There came the mother, Mrs Crich, with her eldest son

'Are we going to stay here?' asked Gudrun.

Gerald. She was a queer unkempt figure, in spite of the at-

'I was only resting a minute,' said Ursula, getting up as if tempts that had obviously been made to bring her into line rebuked. 'We will stand in the corner by the fives-court, we for the day. Her face was pale, yellowish, with a clear, trans-shall see everything from there.'

parent skin, she leaned forward rather, her features were For the moment, the sunshine fell brightly into the church-strongly marked, handsome, with a tense, unseeing, predative yard, there was a vague scent of sap and of spring, perhaps of look. Her colourless hair was untidy, wisps floating down on violets from off the graves. Some white daisies were out, bright to her sac coat of dark blue silk, from under her blue silk hat.

as angels. In the air, the unfolding leaves of a copper-beech She looked like a woman with a monomania, furtive almost, were blood-red.

but heavily proud.

Punctually at eleven o'clock, the carriages began to arrive.

Her son was of a fair, sun-tanned type, rather above middle There was a stir in the crowd at the gate, a concentration as a height, well-made, and almost exaggeratedly well-dressed. But carriage drove up, wedding guests were mounting up the steps about him also was the strange, guarded look, the unconscious and passing along the red carpet to the church. They were all glisten, as if he did not belong to the same creation as the **Contents**



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people about him. Gudrun lighted on him at once. There was The bridesmaids were here, and yet the bridegroom had something northern about him that magnetised her. In his not come. Ursula wondered if something was amiss, and if clear northern flesh and his fair hair was a glisten like sun-the wedding would yet all go wrong. She felt troubled, as if it shine refracted through crystals of ice. And he looked so new, rested upon her. The chief bridesmaids had arrived. Ursula unbroached, pure as an arctic thing. Perhaps he was thirty watched them come up the steps. One of them she knew, a years old, perhaps more. His gleaming beauty, maleness, like a tall, slow, reluctant woman with a weight of fair hair and a young, good-humoured, smiling wolf, did not blind her to pale, long face. This was Hermione Roddice, a friend of the significant, sinister stillness in his bearing, the lurking Criches. Now

she came along, with her head held up, balanc-danger of his unsubdued temper. 'His totem is the wolf,' she ing an enormous flat hat of pale yellow velvet, on which were repeated to herself. 'His mother is an old, unbroken wolf.'

streaks of ostrich feathers, natural and grey. She drifted for-And then she experienced a keen paroxyism, a transport, as if ward as if scarcely conscious, her long blanched face lifted up, she had made some incredible discovery, known to nobody not to see the world. She was rich. She wore a dress of silky, else on earth. A strange transport took possession of her, all frail velvet, of pale yellow colour, and she carried a lot of small her veins were in a paroxysm of violent sensation. 'Good God!'

rose-coloured cyclamens. Her shoes and stockings were of she exclaimed to herself, 'what is this?' And then, a moment brownish grey, like the feathers on her hat, her hair was heavy, after, she was saying assuredly, 'I shall know more of that man.'

she drifted along with a peculiar fixity of the hips, a strange She was tortured with desire to see him again, a nostalgia, a unwilling motion. She was impressive, in her lovely pale-yel-necessity to see him again, to make sure it was not all a mis-low and brownish-rose, yet macabre, something repulsive.

take, that she was not deluding herself, that she really felt this People were silent when she passed, impressed, roused, want-strange and overwhelming sensation on his account, this ing to jeer, yet for some reason silenced. Her long, pale face, knowledge of him in her essence, this powerful apprehension that she carried lifted up, somewhat in the Rossetti fashion, of him. 'Am I REALLY singled out for him in some way, is seemed almost drugged, as if a strange mass of thoughts coiled there really some pale gold, arctic light that envelopes only us in the darkness within her, and she was never allowed to es-two?' she asked herself. And she could not believe it, she re-cape.

mained in a muse, scarcely conscious of what was going on Ursula watched her with fascination. She knew her a little.

around.

She was the most remarkable woman in the Midlands. Her

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father was a Derbyshire Baronet of the old school, she was a the foremost, at home with them. No one could put her down, woman of the new school, full of intellectuality, and heavy, no one could make mock of her, because she stood among the nerve-worn with consciousness. She was passionately interfirst, and those that were against her were below her, either in ested in reform, her soul was given up to the public cause.

rank, or in wealth, or in high association of thought and But she was a man's woman, it was the manly world that held progress and understanding. So, she was invulnerable. All her her.

life, she had sought to make herself invulnerable, unassail-She had various intimacies of mind and soul with various able, beyond reach of the world's judgment.

men of capacity. Ursula knew, among these men, only Rupert And yet her soul was tortured, exposed. Even walking up Birkin, who was one of the school-inspectors of the county.

the path to the church, confident as she was that in every But Gudrun had met others, in London. Moving with her respect she stood beyond all vulgar judgment, knowing per-artist friends in different kinds of society, Gudrun had al-fectly that her appearance was complete and perfect, accord-ready come to know a good many people of repute and standing to the first standards, yet she suffered a torture, under her ing. She had met Hermione twice, but they did not take to confidence and her pride, feeling herself exposed to wounds each other. It would be queer to meet again down here in the and to mockery and to despite. She always felt vulnerable, Midlands, where their social standing was so diverse, after vulnerable, there was always a secret chink in her armour. She they had known each other on terms of equality in the houses did not know herself what it was. It was a lack of robust self, of sundry acquaintances in town. For Gudrun had been a she had no natural sufficiency, there was a terrible void, a lack, social success, and had her friends among the slack aristocracy a deficiency of being within her.

that keeps touch with the arts.

And she wanted someone to close up this deficiency, to Hermione knew herself to be well-dressed; she knew her-close it up for ever. She craved for Rupert Birkin. When he self to be the social equal, if not far the superior, of anyone was there, she felt complete, she was sufficient, whole. For the she was likely to meet in Willey Green. She knew she was rest of time she was established on the sand, built over a chasm, accepted in the world of culture and of intellect. She was a and, in spite of all her vanity and securities, any common KULTURTRAGER, a medium for the culture of ideas. With maidservant of positive, robust temper could fling her down all that was highest, whether in society or in thought or in this bottomless pit of insufficiency, by the slightest move-public action, or even in art, she was at one, she moved among ment of jeering or contempt. And all the while the pensive, **Contents**



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tortured woman piled up her own defences of aesthetic knowl-He would be in the church, waiting. He would know when edge, and culture, and worldvisions, and disinterestedness.

she came. She shuddered with nervous apprehension and de-Yet she could never stop up the terrible gap of insufficiency.

sire as she went through the church-door. He would be there, If only Birkin would form a close and abiding connection surely he would see how beautiful her dress was, surely he with her, she would be safe during this fretful voyage of life.

would see how she had made herself beautiful for him. He He could make her sound and triumphant, triumphant over would understand, he would be able to see how she was made the very angels of heaven. If only he would do it! But she was for him, the first, how she was, for him, the highest. Surely at tortured with fear, with misgiving. She made herself beauti-last he would be able to accept his highest fate, he would not ful, she strove so hard to come to that degree of beauty and deny her.

advantage, when he should be convinced. But always there In a little convulsion of too-tired yearning, she entered was a deficiency.

the church and looked slowly along her cheeks for him, her He was perverse too. He fought her off, he always fought slender body convulsed with agitation. As best man, he would her off. The more she strove to bring him to her, the more he be standing beside the altar. She looked slowly, deferring in battled her back. And they had been lovers now, for years.

her certainty.

Oh, it was so wearying, so aching; she was so tired. But still And then, he was not there. A terrible storm came over she believed in herself. She knew he was trying to leave her.

her, as if she were drowning. She was possessed by a devastat-She knew he was trying to break away from her finally, to be ing hopelessness. And she approached mechanically to the free. But still she believed in her strength to keep him, she altar. Never had she known such a pang of utter and final believed in her own higher knowledge. His own knowledge hopelessness. It was beyond death, so utterly null, desert.

was high, she was the central touchstone of truth. She only The bridegroom and the groom's man had not yet come.

needed his conjunction with her.

There was a growing consternation outside. Ursula felt al-And this, this conjunction with her, which was his highest most responsible. She could not bear it that the bride should fulfilment also, with the perverseness of a wilful child he arrive, and no groom. The wedding must not be a fiasco, it wanted to deny. With the wilfulness of an obstinate child, he must not.

wanted to break the holy connection that was between them.

But here was the bride's carriage, adorned with ribbons He would be at this wedding; he was to be groom's man.

and cockades. Gaily the grey horses curvetted to their desti-

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nation at the church-gate, a laughter in the whole movement.

went along with him undiminished.

Here was the quick of all laughter and pleasure. The door of And no bridegroom had arrived! It was intolerable for her.

the carriage was thrown open, to let out the very blossom of Ursula, her heart strained with anxiety, was watching the hill the day. The people on the roadway murmured faintly with beyond; the white, descending road, that should give sight of the discontented murmuring of a crowd.

him. There was a carriage. It was running. It had just come The father stepped out first into the air of the morning, into sight. Yes, it was he. Ursula turned towards the bride and like a shadow. He was a tall, thin, careworn man, with a thin the people, and, from her place of vantage, gave an inarticublack beard that was touched with grey. He waited at the late cry. She wanted to warn them that he was coming. But door of the carriage patiently, self-obliterated.

her cry was inarticulate and inaudible, and she flushed deeply, In the opening of the doorway was a shower of fine foli-between her desire and her wincing confusion.

age and flowers, a whiteness of satin and lace, and a sound of The carriage rattled down the hill, and drew near. There a gay voice saying:

was a shout from the people. The bride, who had just reached

'How do I get out?'

the top of the steps, turned round gaily to see what was the A ripple of satisfaction ran through the expectant people.

commotion. She saw a confusion among the people, a cab They pressed near to receive her, looking with zest at the stoop-pulling up, and her lover dropping out of the carriage, and ing blond head with its flower buds, and at the delicate, white, dodging among the horses and into the crowd.

tentative foot that was reaching down to the step of the car-

'Tibs! Tibs!' she cried in her sudden, mocking excitement, riage. There was a sudden foaming rush, and the bride like a standing high on the path in the sunlight and waving her sudden surf-rush, floating all white beside her father in the bouquet. He, dodging with his hat in his hand, had not heard.

morning shadow of trees, her veil flowing with laughter.

'Tibs!' she cried again, looking down to him.

'That's done it!' she said.

He glanced up, unaware, and saw the bride and her father She put her hand on the arm of her careworn, sallow fa-standing on the path above him. A queer, startled look went ther, and frothing her light draperies, proceeded over the eternal over his face. He hesitated for a moment. Then he gathered red carpet. Her father, mute and yellowish, his black beard himself together for a leap, to overtake her.

making him look more careworn, mounted the steps stiffly, as

'Ah-h-h!' came her strange, intaken cry, as, on the reflex, if his spirit were absent; but the laughing mist of the bride she started, turned and fled, scudding with an unthinkable

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swift beating of her white feet and fraying of her white gar-figure was narrow but nicely made. He went with a slight ments, towards the church. Like a hound the young man was trail of one foot, which came only from selfconsciousness.

after her, leaping the steps and swinging past her father, his Although he was dressed correctly for his part, yet there was supple haunches working like those of a hound that bears an innate incongruity which caused a slight ridiculousness in down on the quarry.

his appearance. His nature was clever and separate, he did not

'Ay, after her!' cried the vulgar women below, carried sud-fit at all in the conventional occasion. Yet he subordinated denly into the sport.

himself to the common idea, travestied himself.

She, her flowers shaken from her like froth, was steadying He affected to be quite ordinary, perfectly and marvellously herself to turn the angle of the church. She glanced behind, commonplace. And he did it so well, taking the tone of his and with a wild cry of laughter and challenge, veered, poised, surroundings, adjusting himself quickly to his interlocutor and was gone beyond the grey stone buttress. In another in-and his circumstance, that he achieved a verisimilitude of or-stant the bridegroom, bent forward as he ran, had caught the dinary commonplaceness that usually propitiated his onlookangle of the silent stone with his hand, and had swung him-ers for the moment, disarmed them from attacking his single-self out of sight, his supple, strong loins vanishing in pursuit.

ness.

Instantly cries and exclamations of excitement burst from Now he spoke quite easily and pleasantly to Mr Crich, as the crowd at the gate. And then Ursula noticed again the they walked along the path; he played with situations like a dark, rather stooping figure of Mr Crich, waiting suspended man on a tight-rope: but always on a tight-rope, pretending on the path,

watching with expressionless face the flight to nothing but ease.

the church. It was over, and he turned round to look behind

'I'm sorry we are so late,' he was saying. 'We couldn't find him, at the figure of Rupert Birkin, who at once came for-a button-hook, so it took us a long time to button our boots.

ward and joined him.

But you were to the moment.'

'We'll bring up the rear,' said Birkin, a faint smile on his

'We are usually to time,' said Mr Crich.

face.

'And I'm always late,' said Birkin. 'But today I was RE-

'Ay!' replied the father laconically. And the two men turned ALLY punctual, only accidentally not so. I'm sorry.'

together up the path.

The two men were gone, there was nothing more to see, Birkin was as thin as Mr Crich, pale and ill-looking. His for the time. Ursula was left thinking about Birkin. He piqued

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her, attracted her, and annoyed her.

to Gudrun's pronouncements, even when she was not in ac-She wanted to know him more. She had spoken with him cord altogether.

once or twice, but only in his official capacity as inspector.

The sisters sat silent, waiting for the wedding party to She thought he seemed to acknowledge some kinship between come out. Gudrun was impatient of talk. She wanted to think her and him, a natural, tacit understanding, a using of the about Gerald Crich. She wanted to see if the strong feeling same language. But there had been no time for the under-she had got from him was real. She wanted to have herself standing to develop. And something kept her from him, as ready.

well as attracted her to him. There was a certain hostility, a Inside the church, the wedding was going on. Hermione hidden ultimate reserve in him, cold and inaccessible.

Roddice was thinking only of Birkin. He stood near her. She Yet she wanted to know him.

seemed to gravitate physically towards him. She wanted to

'What do you think of Rupert Birkin?' she asked, a little stand touching him. She could hardly be sure he was near her, reluctantly, of Gudrun. She did not want to discuss him.

if she did not touch him. Yet she stood subjected through the

'What do I think of Rupert Birkin?' repeated Gudrun. 'I wedding service.

think he's attractive—decidedly attractive. What I can't stand She had suffered so bitterly when he did not come, that about him is his way with other people—his way of treating still she was dazed. Still she was gnawed as

by a neuralgia, any little fool as if she were his greatest consideration. One tormented by his potential absence from her. She had awaited feels so awfully sold, oneself.'

him in a faint delirium of nervous torture. As she stood bear-

'Why does he do it?' said Ursula.

ing herself pensively, the rapt look on her face, that seemed

'Because he has no real critical faculty—of people, at all spiritual, like the angels, but which came from torture, gave events,' said Gudrun. 'I tell you, he treats any little fool as he her a certain poignancy that tore his heart with pity. He saw treats me or you—and it's such an insult.'

her bowed head, her rapt face, the face of an almost demonia-

'Oh, it is,' said Ursula. 'One must discriminate.'

cal ecstatic. Feeling him looking, she lifted her face and sought

'One MUST discriminate,' repeated Gudrun. 'But he's a his eyes, her own beautiful grey eyes flaring him a great sig-wonderful chap, in other respects —a marvellous personality.

nal. But he avoided her look, she sank her head in torment But you can't trust him.'

and shame, the gnawing at her heart going on. And he too

'Yes,' said Ursula vaguely. She was always forced to assent was tortured with shame, and ultimate dislike, and with acute

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pity for her, because he did not want to meet her eyes, he did not bear it. She wanted to be alone, to know this strange, not want to receive her flare of recognition.

sharp inoculation that had changed the whole temper of her The bride and bridegroom were married, the party went blood.

into the vestry. Hermione crowded involuntarily up against Birkin, to touch him. And he endured it.

Outside, Gudrun and Ursula listened for their father's playing on the organ. He would enjoy playing a wedding march. Now the married pair were coming! The bells were ringing, making the air shake. Ursula wondered if the trees and the flowers could feel the vibration, and what they thought of it, this strange motion in the air. The bride was quite demure on the arm of the bridegroom, who stared up into the sky before him, shutting and opening his eyes unconsciously, as if he were neither here nor there. He looked rather comical, blinking and trying to be in the scene, when emotionally he was violated by his exposure to a crowd. He looked a typical naval officer, manly, and up to his duty.

Birkin came with Hermione. She had a rapt, triumphant look, like the fallen angels restored, yet still subtly demoniacal, now she held Birkin by the arm. And he was expressionless, neutralised, possessed by her as if it were his fate, without question.

Gerald Crich came, fair, goodlooking, healthy, with a great reserve of energy. He was erect and complete, there was a strange stealth glistening through his amiable, almost happy appearance. Gudrun rose sharply and went away. She could **Contents**



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was host. He stood in the homely entrance hall, friendly and easy, attending to the men. He seemed to take pleasure in his social functions, he smiled, and was abundant in hospitality.

The women wandered about in a little confusion, chased hither and thither by the three married daughters of the house.

All the while there could be heard the characteristic, imperious voice of one Crich woman or another calling 'Helen, come here a minute,' 'Marjory, I want you—here.' 'Oh, I say, Mrs Witham—.' There was a great rustling of skirts, swift glimpses Chapter 2.

of smartly-dressed women, a child danced through the hall and back again, a maidservant came and went hurriedly.

Shortlands.

Meanwhile the men stood in calm little groups, chatting, smoking, pretending to pay no heed to the rustling anima-The Brangwens went home to Beldover, the wedding-party tion of the women's world. But they could not really talk, gathered at Shortlands, the Criches' home. It was a long, low because of the glassy ravel of women's excited, cold laughter old house, a sort of manor farm, that spread along the top of and running voices. They waited, uneasy, suspended, rather a slope just beyond the narrow little lake of Willey Water.

bored. But Gerald remained as if genial and happy, unaware Shortlands

looked across a sloping meadow that might be a that he was waiting or unoccupied, knowing himself the very park, because of the large, solitary trees that stood here and pivot of the occasion.

there, across the water of the narrow lake, at the wooded hill Suddenly Mrs Crich came noiselessly into the room, peer-that successfully hid the colliery valley beyond, but did not ing about with her strong, clear face. She was still wearing her quite hide the rising smoke. Nevertheless, the scene was rural hat, and her sac coat of blue silk.

and picturesque, very peaceful, and the house had a charm of

'What is it, mother?' said Gerald.

its own.

'Nothing, nothing!' she answered vaguely. And she went It was crowded now with the family and the wedding straight towards Birkin, who was talking to a Crich brother-guests. The father, who was not well, withdrew to rest. Gerald in-law.

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'How do you do, Mr Birkin,' she said, in her low voice, always well washed, at any rate at the neck and ears.

that seemed to take no count of her guests. She held out her He smiled faintly, thinking these things. Yet he was tense, hand to him.

feeling that he and the elderly, estranged woman were confer-

'Oh Mrs Crich,' replied Birkin, in his readily-changing ring together like traitors, like enemies within the camp of voice, 'I couldn't come to you before.'

the other people. He resembled a deer, that throws one ear

'I don't know half the people here,' she said, in her low back upon the trail behind, and one ear forward, to know voice. Her son-in-law moved uneasily away.

what is ahead.

'And you don't like strangers?' laughed Birkin. 'I myself

'People don't really matter,' he said, rather unwilling to can never see why one should take account of people, just continue.

because they happen to be in the room with one: why The mother looked up at him with sudden, dark interro-SHOULD I know they are there?'

gation, as if doubting his sincerity.

'Why indeed, why indeed!' said Mrs Crich, in her low,

'How do you mean, MATTER?' she asked sharply.

tense voice. 'Except that they ARE there. I don't know people

'Not many people are anything at all,' he answered, forced whom I find in the house. The children introduce them to to go deeper than he wanted to. 'They jingle and giggle. It me—"Mother, this is Mr So-and-so." I am no further. What would be much better if they were just wiped out. Essen-has Mr So-and-so to do with his own name?—and what have tially, they don't exist, they aren't there.'

I to do with either him or his name?'

She watched him steadily while he spoke.

She looked up at Birkin. She startled him. He was flat-

'But we didn't imagine them,' she said sharply.

tered too that she came to talk to him, for she took hardly any

'There's nothing to imagine, that's why they don't exist.'

notice of anybody. He looked down at her tense clear face,

'Well,' she said, 'I would hardly go as far as that. There with its heavy features, but he was afraid to look into her they are, whether they exist or no. It doesn't rest with me to heavy-seeing blue eyes. He noticed instead how her hair looped decide on their existence. I only know that I can't be expected in slack, slovenly strands over her rather beautiful ears, which to take count of them all. You can't expect me to know them, were not quite clean. Neither was her neck perfectly clean.

just because they happen to be there. As far as I go they Even in that he seemed to belong to her, rather than to the might as well not be there.'

rest of the company; though, he thought to himself, he was

'Exactly,' he replied.

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'Mightn't they?' she asked again.

sounded profoundly cynical. Birkin felt afraid, as if he dared

'Just as well,' he repeated. And there was a little pause.

not realise. And Mrs Crich moved away, forgetting him. But

'Except that they ARE there, and that's a nuisance,' she she returned on her traces.

said. 'There are my sons-in-law,' she went on, in a sort of

'I should like him to have a friend,' she said. 'He has never monologue. 'Now Laura's got married, there's another. And I had a friend.'

really don't know John from James yet. They come up to me Birkin looked down into her eyes, which were blue, and and call me mother. I know what they will say—"how are watching heavily. He could not understand them. 'Am I my you, mother?" I ought to say, "I am not your mother, in any brother's keeper?' he said to himself, almost flippantly.

sense." But what is the use? There they are. I have had chil-Then he remembered, with a slight shock, that that was dren of my own. I suppose I know them from another Cain's cry. And Gerald was Cain, if anybody. Not that he was woman's children.'

Cain, either, although he had slain his brother. There was

'One would suppose so,' he said.

such a thing as pure accident, and the consequences did not She looked at him, somewhat surprised, forgetting per-attach to one, even though one had killed one's brother in haps that she was talking to him. And she lost her thread.

such wise. Gerald as a boy had accidentally killed his brother.

She looked round the room, vaguely. Birkin could not guess What then? Why seek to draw a brand and a curse across the what she was looking for, nor what she was thinking. Evi-life that had caused the accident? A man can live by accident, dently she noticed her sons.

and die by accident. Or can he not? Is every man's life subject

'Are my children all there?' she asked him abruptly.

to pure accident, is it only the race, the genus, the species, He laughed, startled, afraid perhaps.

that has a universal reference? Or is this not true, is there no

'I scarcely know them, except Gerald,' he replied.

such thing as pure accident? Has EVERYTHING that hap-

'Gerald!' she exclaimed. 'He's the most wanting of them pens a universal significance? Has it? Birkin, pondering as he all. You'd never think it, to look at him now, would you?'

stood there, had forgotten Mrs Crich, as she had forgotten

'No,' said Birkin.

him.

The mother looked across at her eldest son, stared at him He did not believe that there was any such thing as acci-heavily for some time.

dent. It all hung together, in the deepest sense.

'Ay,' she said, in an incomprehensible monosyllable, that Just as he had decided this, one of the Crich daughters

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came up, saying:

noise.'

'Won't you come and take your hat off, mother dear? We

'Do I?' he answered. And then, to the company, 'Father is shall be sitting down to eat in a minute, and it's a formal lying down, he is not quite well.'

occasion, darling, isn't it?' She drew her arm through her

'How is he, really?' called one of the married daughters, mother's, and they went away. Birkin immediately went to peeping round the immense wedding cake that towered up in talk to the nearest man.

the middle of the table shedding its artificial flowers.

The gong sounded for the luncheon. The men looked up,

'He has no pain, but he feels tired,' replied Winifred, the but no move was made to the diningroom. The women of girl with the hair down her back.

the house seemed not to feel that the sound had meaning for The wine was filled, and everybody was talking boister-them. Five minutes passed by. The elderly manservant, ously. At the far end of the table sat the mother, with her Crowther, appeared in the doorway exasperatedly. He looked loosely-looped

hair. She had Birkin for a neighbour. Some-with appeal at Gerald. The latter took up a large, curved conch times she glanced fiercely down the rows of faces, bending shell, that lay on a shelf, and without reference to anybody, forwards and staring unceremoniously. And she would say in blew a shattering blast. It was a strange rousing noise, that a low voice to Birkin: made the heart beat. The summons was almost magical. Ev-

'Who is that young man?'

erybody came running, as if at a signal. And then the crowd

'I don't know,' Birkin answered discreetly.

in one impulse moved to the diningroom.

'Have I seen him before?' she asked.

Gerald waited a moment, for his sister to play hostess. He

'I don't think so. I haven't,' he replied. And she was satis-knew his mother would pay no attention to her duties. But fied. Her eyes closed wearily, a peace came over her face, she his sister merely crowded to her seat. Therefore the young looked like a queen in repose. Then she started, a little social man, slightly too dictatorial, directed the guests to their places.

smile came on her face, for a moment she looked the pleasant There was a moment's lull, as everybody looked at the hostess. For a moment she bent graciously, as if everyone were BORS D'OEUVRES that were being handed round. And welcome and delightful. And then immediately the shadow out of this lull, a girl of thirteen or fourteen, with her long came back, a sullen, eagle look was on her face, she glanced hair down her back, said in a calm, self-possessed voice: from under her brows like a sinister creature at bay, hating 'Gerald, you forget father, when you make that unearthly them all.

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'Mother,' called Diana, a handsome girl a little older than

'DO you think race corresponds with nationality?' she asked Winifred, 'I may have wine, mayn't I?'

musingly, with expressionless indecision.

'Yes, you may have wine,' replied the mother automati-Birkin knew she was waiting for him to participate. And cally, for she was perfectly indifferent to the question.

dutifully he spoke up.

And Diana beckoned to the footman to fill her glass.

'I think Gerald is right—race is the essential element in

'Gerald shouldn't forbid me,' she said calmly, to the com-nationality, in Europe at least,' he said.

pany at large.

Again Hermione paused, as if to allow this statement to

'All right, Di,' said her brother amiably. And she glanced cool. Then she said with strange assumption of authority: challenge at him as she drank from her glass.

'Yes, but even so, is the patriotic appeal an appeal to the There was a strange

freedom, that almost amounted to racial instinct? Is it not rather an appeal to the proprietory anarchy, in the house. It was rather a resistance to authority, instinct, the COMMERCIAL instinct? And isn't this what than liberty. Gerald had some command, by mere force of we mean by nationality?'

personality, not because of any granted position. There was a

'Probably,' said Birkin, who felt that such a discussion was quality in his voice, amiable but dominant, that cowed the out of place and out of time.

others, who were all younger than he.

But Gerald was now on the scent of argument.

Hermione was having a discussion with the bridegroom

'A race may have its commercial aspect,' he said. 'In fact it about nationality.

must. It is like a family. You MUST make provision. And to

'No,' she said, 'I think that the appeal to patriotism is a make provision you have got to strive against other families, mistake. It is like one house of business rivalling another house other nations. I don't see why you shouldn't.'

of business.'

Again Hermione made a pause, domineering and cold,

'Well you can hardly say that, can you?' exclaimed Gerald, before she replied: 'Yes, I think it is always wrong to provoke who had a real PASSION for discussion. 'You couldn't call a a spirit of rivalry. It makes bad blood. And bad blood accu-race a business concern, could you?—and nationality roughly mulates.'

corresponds to race, I think. I think it is MEANT to.'

'But you can't do away with the spirit of emulation alto-There was a moment's pause. Gerald and Hermione were gether?' said Gerald. 'It is one

of the necessary incentives to always strangely but politely and evenly inimical.

production and improvement.'

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'Yes,' came Hermione's sauntering response. 'I think you

'Only because the law prevents him,' said Gerald.

can do away with it.'

'Not only,' said Birkin. 'Ninety-nine men out of a hun-

'I must say,' said Birkin, 'I detest the spirit of emulation.'

dred don't want my hat.'

Hermione was biting a piece of bread, pulling it from be-

'That's a matter of opinion,' said Gerald.

tween her teeth with her fingers, in a slow, slightly derisive

'Or the hat,' laughed the bridegroom.

movement. She turned to Birkin.

'And if he does want my hat, such as it is,' said Birkin,

'You do hate it, yes,' she said, intimate and gratified.

'why, surely it is open to me to decide, which is a greater loss

'Detest it,' he repeated.

to me, my hat, or my liberty as a free and indifferent man. If

'Yes,' she murmured, assured and satisfied.

I am compelled to offer fight, I lose the latter. It is a question

'But,' Gerald insisted, 'you don't allow one man to take which is worth more to me, my pleasant liberty of conduct, or away his neighbour's living, so why should you allow one na-my hat.'

tion to take away the living from another nation?'

'Yes,' said Hermione, watching Birkin strangely. 'Yes.'

There was a long slow murmur from Hermione before she

'But would you let somebody come and snatch your hat broke into speech, saying with a laconic indifference: off your head?' the bride asked of Hermione.

'It is not always a question of possessions, is it? It is not all The face of the tall straight woman turned slowly and as a question of goods?'

if drugged to this new speaker.

Gerald was nettled by this implication of vulgar material-

'No,' she replied, in a low inhuman tone, that seemed to ism.

contain a chuckle. 'No, I shouldn't let anybody take my hat

'Yes, more or less,' he retorted. 'If I go and take a man's hat off my head.'

from off his head, that hat becomes a symbol of that man's

'How would you prevent it?' asked Gerald.

liberty. When he fights me for his hat, he is fighting me for

'I don't know,' replied Hermione slowly. 'Probably I should his liberty.'

kill him.'

Hermione was nonplussed.

There was a strange chuckle in her tone, a dangerous and

'Yes,' she said, irritated. 'But that way of arguing by imagi-convincing humour in her bearing.

nary instances is not supposed to be genuine, is it? A man

'Of course,' said Gerald, 'I can see Rupert's point. It is a does NOT come and take my hat from off my head, does he?'

question to him whether his hat or his peace of mind is more

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important.'

straint.

'Peace of body,' said Birkin.

'Did I do it by accident, or on purpose?' he asked himself.

'Well, as you like there,' replied Gerald. 'But how are you And he decided that, according to the vulgar phrase, he had going to decide this for a nation?'

done it 'accidentally on purpose.' He looked round at the

'Heaven preserve me,' laughed Birkin.

hired footman. And the hired footman came, with a silent

'Yes, but suppose you have to?' Gerald persisted.

step of cold servant-like disapprobation. Birkin decided that

'Then it is the same. If the national crown-piece is an old he detested toasts, and footmen, and assemblies, and man-hat, then the thieving gent may have it.'

kind altogether, in most of its aspects. Then he rose to make a

'But CAN the national or racial hat be an old hat?' in-speech. But he was somehow disgusted.

sisted Gerald.

At length it was over, the meal. Several men strolled out

'Pretty well bound to be, I believe,' said Birkin.

into the garden. There was a lawn, and flower-beds, and at

'I'm not so sure,' said Gerald.

the boundary an iron fence shutting off the little field or

'I don't agree, Rupert,' said Hermione.

park. The view was pleasant; a highroad curving round the

'All right,' said Birkin.

edge of a low lake, under the trees. In the spring air, the water

'I'm all for the old national hat,' laughed Gerald.

gleamed and the opposite woods were purplish with new life.

'And a fool you look in it,' cried Diana, his pert sister who Charming Jersey cattle came to the fence, breathing hoarsely was just in her teens.

from their velvet muzzles at the human beings, expecting

'Oh, we're quite out of our depths with these old hats,'

perhaps a crust.

cried Laura Crich. 'Dry up now, Gerald. We're going to drink Birkin leaned on the fence. A cow was breathing wet hot-toasts. Let us drink toasts. Toasts —glasses, glasses—now then, ness on his hand.

toasts! Speech! Speech!'

'Pretty cattle, very pretty,' said Marshall, one of the broth-Birkin, thinking about race or national death, watched his ers-in-law. 'They give the best milk you can have.'

glass being filled with champagne. The bubbles broke at the

'Yes,' said Birkin.

rim, the man withdrew, and feeling a sudden thirst at the

'Eh, my little beauty, eh, my beauty!' said Marshall, in a sight of the fresh wine, Birkin drank up his glass. A queer queer high falsetto voice, that caused the other man to have little tension in the room roused him. He felt a sharp con-convulsions of laughter in his stomach.

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'Who won the race, Lupton?' he called to the bridegroom, be in your road.'

to hide the fact that he was laughing.

'Christ! Marshall, go and talk to somebody else,' cried The bridegroom took his cigar from his mouth.

Gerald, with sudden impatience.

'The race?' he exclaimed. Then a rather thin smile came

'By God, I'm willing,' said Marshall, in a temper. 'Too over his face. He did not want to say anything about the flight much bloody soul and talk altogether—'

to the church door. 'We got there together. At least she touched He withdrew in a dudgeon, Gerald staring after him with first, but I had my hand on her

shoulder.'

angry eyes, that grew gradually calm and amiable as the stoutly-

'What's this?' asked Gerald.

built form of the other man passed into the distance.

Birkin told him about the race of the bride and the bride-

'There's one thing, Lupton,' said Gerald, turning suddenly groom.

to the bridegroom. 'Laura won't have brought such a fool into

'H'm!' said Gerald, in disapproval. 'What made you late the family as Lottie did.'

then?'

'Comfort yourself with that,' laughed Birkin.

'Lupton would talk about the immortality of the soul,'

'I take no notice of them,' laughed the bridegroom.

said Birkin, 'and then he hadn't got a button-hook.'

'What about this race then—who began it?' Gerald asked.

'Oh God!' cried Marshall. 'The immortality of the soul

'We were late. Laura was at the top of the churchyard on your wedding day! Hadn't you got anything better to oc-steps when our cab came up. She saw Lupton bolting to-cupy your mind?'

wards her. And she fled. But why do you look so cross? Does

'What's wrong with it?' asked the bridegroom, a clean-it hurt your sense of the family dignity?' shaven naval man, flushing sensitively.

'It does, rather,' said Gerald. 'If you're doing a thing, do it

'Sounds as if you were going to be executed instead of properly, and if you're not going to do it properly, leave it married. THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL!' repeated alone.'

the brother-in-law, with most killing emphasis.

'Very nice aphorism,' said Birkin.

But he fell quite flat.

'Don't you agree?' asked Gerald.

'And what did you decide?' asked Gerald, at once pricking

'Quite,' said Birkin. 'Only it bores me rather, when you up his ears at the thought of a metaphysical discussion.

become aphoristic.'

'You don't want a soul today, my boy,' said Marshall. 'It'd

'Damn you, Rupert, you want all the aphorisms your own

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way,' said Gerald.

in singleness. And they only like to do the collective thing.'

'No. I want them out of the way, and you're always shov-

'And I,' said Gerald grimly, 'shouldn't like to be in a world ing them in it.'

of people who acted individually and spontaneously, as you Gerald smiled grimly at this humorism. Then he made a call it. We should have everybody cutting everybody else's little gesture of dismissal, with his eyebrows.

throat in five minutes.'

'You don't believe in having any standard of behaviour at

'That means YOU would like to be cutting everybody's all, do you?' he challenged Birkin, censoriously.

throat,' said Birkin.

'Standard—no. I hate standards. But they're necessary for

'How does that follow?' asked Gerald crossly.

the common ruck. Anybody who is anything can just be him-

'No man,' said Birkin, 'cuts another man's throat unless he self and do as he likes.'

wants to cut it, and unless the other man wants it cutting.

'But what do you mean by being himself?' said Gerald. 'Is This is a complete truth. It takes two people to make a mur-that an aphorism or a cliche?'

der: a murderer and a murderee. And a murderee is a man

'I mean just doing what you want to do. I think it was who is murderable. And a man who is murderable is a man perfect good form in Laura to bolt from Lupton to the church who in a profound if hidden lust desires to be murdered.'

door. It was almost a masterpiece in good form. It's the hard-

'Sometimes you talk pure nonsense,' said Gerald to Birkin.

est thing in the world to act spontaneously on one's impulses—

'As a matter of fact, none of us wants our throat cut, and most and it's the only really gentlemanly thing to do—provided other people would like to cut it for us—some time or other—

you're fit to do it.'

,

'You don't expect me to take you seriously, do you?' asked

'It's a nasty view of things, Gerald,' said Birkin, 'and no Gerald.

wonder you are afraid of yourself and your own unhappi-

'Yes, Gerald, you're one of the very few people I do expect ness.'

that of.'

'How am I afraid of myself?' said Gerald; 'and I don't think

'Then I'm afraid I can't come up to your expectations here, I am unhappy.'

at any rate. You think people should just do as they like.'

'You seem to have a lurking desire to have your gizzard

'I think they always do. But I should like them to like the slit, and imagine every man has his knife up his sleeve for purely individual thing in themselves, which makes them act you,' Birkin said.

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'How do you make that out?' said Gerald.

'From you,' said Birkin.

There was a pause of strange enmity between the two men, that was very near to love. It was always the same between them; always their talk brought them into a deadly nearness of contact, a strange, perilous intimacy which was either hate or love, or both. They parted with apparent unconcern, as if their going apart were a trivial occurrence. And they really kept it to the level of trivial occurrence. Yet the heart of each burned from the other. They burned with each other, inwardly.

This they would never admit. They intended to keep their Chapter 3.

relationship a casual free-and-easy friendship, they were not *Classroom*.

going to be so unmanly and unnatural as to allow any heart-burning between them. They had not the faintest belief in A school-day was drawing to a close. In the classroom deep relationship between men and men, and their disbelief the last lesson was in progress, peaceful and still. It was elprevented any development of their powerful but suppressed ementary botany. The desks were littered with catkins, hazel friendliness.

and willow, which the children had been sketching. But the sky had come overdark, as the end of the afternoon approached: there was scarcely light to draw any more. Ursula stood in front of the class, leading the children by questions to understand the structure and the meaning of the catkins.

A heavy, copper-coloured beam of light came in at the west window, gilding the outlines of the children's heads with red gold, and falling on the wall opposite in a rich, ruddy illumination. Ursula, however, was scarcely conscious of it.

She was busy, the end of the day was here, the work went on

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as a peaceful tide that is at flood, hushed to retire.

at her with a new pleasure, feeling gay in his heart, irrespon-This day had gone by like so many more, in an activity sible.

that was like a trance. At the end there was a little haste, to

'You are doing catkins?' he asked, picking up a piece of finish what was in hand. She was pressing the children with hazel from a scholar's desk in front of him. 'Are they as far out questions, so that they should know all they were to know, by as this? I hadn't noticed them this year.'

the time the gong went. She stood in shadow in front of the He looked absorbedly at the tassel of hazel in his hand.

class, with catkins in her hand, and she leaned towards the

'The red ones too!' he said, looking at the flickers of crim-children, absorbed in the passion of instruction.

son that came from the female bud.

She heard, but did not notice the click of the door. Sud-Then he went in among the desks, to see the scholars' books.

denly she started. She saw, in the shaft of ruddy, copper-Ursula watched his intent progress. There was a stillness in coloured light near her, the face of a man. It was gleaming like his motion that hushed the activities of her heart. She seemed fire, watching her, waiting for her to be aware. It startled her to be standing aside in arrested silence, watching him move in terribly. She thought she was going to faint. All her sup-another, concentrated world. His presence was so quiet, al-pressed, subconscious fear sprang into being, with anguish.

most like a vacancy in the corporate air.

'Did I startle you?' said Birkin, shaking hands with her. 'I Suddenly he lifted his face to her, and her heart quick-thought you had heard me come in.'

ened at the flicker of his voice.

'No,' she faltered, scarcely able to speak. He laughed, say-

'Give them some crayons, won't you?' he said, 'so that they ing he was sorry. She wondered why it amused him.

can make the gynaecious flowers red, and the androgynous

'It is so dark,' he said. 'Shall we have the light?'

yellow. I'd chalk them in plain, chalk in nothing else, merely And moving

aside, he switched on the strong electric lights.

the red and the yellow. Outline scarcely matters in this case.

The classroom was distinct and hard, a strange place after There is just the one fact to emphasise.'

the soft dim magic that filled it before he came. Birkin turned

'I haven't any crayons,' said Ursula.

curiously to look at Ursula. Her eyes were round and wonder-

'There will be some somewhere—red and yellow, that's all ing, bewildered, her mouth quivered slightly. She looked like you want.'

one who is suddenly wakened. There was a living, tender beauty, Ursula sent out a boy on a quest.

like a tender light of dawn shining from her face. He looked

'It will make the books untidy,' she said to Birkin, flush-

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ing deeply.

'Oh no, I like it awfully,' laughed Ursula, a little bit ex-

'Not very,' he said. 'You must mark in these things obvi-cited and bewildered, because Hermione seemed to be com-ously. It's the fact you want to emphasise, not the subjective pelling her, coming very close to her, as if intimate with her; impression to record. What's the fact?—red little spiky stig-and yet, how could she be intimate?

mas of the female flower, dangling yellow male catkin, yellow This was the answer Hermione wanted. She turned satis-pollen flying from one to the other. Make a pictorial record of fied to Birkin.

the fact, as a child does when drawing a face—two eyes, one

'What are you doing?' she sang, in her casual, inquisitive nose, mouth with teeth—so—' And he drew a figure on the fashion.

blackboard.

'Catkins,' he replied.

At that moment another vision was seen through the glass

'Really!' she said. 'And what do you learn about them?'

panels of the door. It was Hermione Roddice. Birkin went She spoke all the while in a mocking, half teasing fashion, as and opened to her.

if making game of the whole business. She picked up a twig

'I saw your car,' she said to him. 'Do you mind my coming of the catkin, piqued by Birkin's attention to it.

to find you? I wanted to see you when you were on duty.'

She was a strange figure in the classroom, wearing a large, She looked at him for a long time, intimate and playful, old cloak of greenish cloth, on which was a raised pattern of then she gave a short little laugh. And then only she turned dull gold. The high collar, and the inside of the cloak, was to Ursula,

who, with all the class, had been watching the little lined with dark fur. Beneath she had a dress of fine lavender-scene between the lovers.

coloured cloth, trimmed with fur, and her hat was close-fit-

'How do you do, Miss Brangwen,' sang Hermione, in her ting, made of fur and of the dull, green-and-gold figured low, odd, singing fashion, that sounded almost as if she were stuff. She was tall and strange, she looked as if she had come poking fun. 'Do you mind my coming in?'

out of some new, bizarre picture.

Her grey, almost sardonic eyes rested all the while on Ursula,

'Do you know the little red ovary flowers, that produce as if summing her up.

the nuts? Have you ever noticed them?' he asked her. And he

'Oh no,' said Ursula.

came close and pointed them out to her, on the sprig she

'Are you SURE?' repeated Hermione, with complete sang held.

froid, and an odd, half-bullying effrontery.

'No,' she replied. 'What are they?'

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'Those are the little seed-producing flowers, and the long lighted room on to the grey, colourless outside, where rain catkins, they only produce pollen, to fertilise them.'

was noiselessly falling. Ursula put away her things in the cup-

'Do they, do they!' repeated Hermione, looking closely.

board.

'From those little red bits, the nuts come; if they receive At length Hermione rose and came near to her.

pollen from the long danglers.'

'Your sister has come home?' she said.

'Little red flames, little red flames,' murmured Hermione

'Yes,' said Ursula.

to herself. And she remained for some moments looking only

'And does she like being back in Beldover?'

at the small buds out of which the red flickers of the stigma

'No,' said Ursula.

issued.

'No, I wonder she can bear it. It takes all my strength, to

'Aren't they beautiful? I think they're so beautiful,' she bear the ugliness of this district, when I stay here. Won't you said, moving close to Birkin, and pointing to the red fila-come and see me? Won't you come with your sister to stay at ments with her long, white finger.

Breadalby for a few days?—do—'

'Had you never noticed them before?' he asked.

'Thank you very much,' said Ursula.

'No, never before,' she replied.

'Then I will write to you,' said Hermione. 'You think your

'And now you will always see them,' he said.

sister will come? I should be so glad. I think she is wonderful.

'Now I shall always see them,' she repeated. 'Thank you so I think some of her work is really wonderful. I have two wa-much for showing me. I think they're so beautiful—little red ter-wagtails, carved in wood, and painted—perhaps you have flames—'

seen it?'

Her absorption was strange, almost rhapsodic. Both Birkin

'No,' said Ursula.

and Ursula were suspended. The little red pistillate flowers

'I think it is perfectly wonderful—like a flash of instinct.'

had some strange, almost mystic-passionate attraction for her.

'Her little carvings ARE strange,' said Ursula.

The lesson was finished, the books were put away, at last

'Perfectly beautiful—full of primitive passion—'

the class was dismissed. And still Hermione sat at the table,

'Isn't it queer that she always likes little things?—she must with her chin in her hand, her elbow on the table, her long always work small things, that one can put between one's hands, white face pushed up, not attending to anything. Birkin had birds and tiny animals. She likes to look through the wrong gone to the window, and was looking from the brilliantly-end of the opera glasses, and see the world that way—why is **Contents**



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it, do you think?'

not present, 'do you really think it is worth while? Do you Hermione looked down at Ursula with that long, detached really think the children are better for being roused to con-scrutinising gaze that excited the younger woman.

sciousness?'

'Yes,' said Hermione at length. 'It is curious. The little A dark flash went over his face, a silent fury. He was hol-things seem to be more subtle to her ___'

low-cheeked and pale, almost unearthly. And the woman, with

'But they aren't, are they? A mouse isn't any more subtle her serious, conscience-harrowing question tortured him on than a lion, is it?'

the quick.

Again Hermione looked down at Ursula with that long

'They are not roused to consciousness,' he said. 'Conscious-scrutiny, as if she were following some train of thought of her ness comes to them, willy-nilly.'

own, and barely attending to the other's speech.

'But do you think they are better for having it quickened,

'I don't know,' she replied.

stimulated? Isn't it better that they should remain uncon-

'Rupert, Rupert,' she sang mildly, calling him to her. He scious of the hazel, isn't it better that they should see as a approached in silence.

whole, without all this pulling to pieces, all this knowledge?'

'Are little things more subtle than big things?' she asked,

'Would you rather, for yourself, know or not know, that with the odd grunt of laughter in her voice, as if she were the little red flowers are there, putting out for the pollen?' he making game of him in the question.

asked harshly. His voice was brutal, scornful, cruel.

'Dunno,' he said.

Hermione remained with her face lifted up, abstracted.

'I hate subtleties,' said Ursula.

He hung silent in irritation.

Hermione looked at her slowly.

'I don't know,' she replied, balancing mildly. 'I don't know.'

'Do you?' she said.

'But knowing is everything to you, it is all your life,' he

'I always think they are a sign of weakness,' said Ursula, up broke out. She slowly looked at him.

in arms, as if her prestige were threatened.

'Is it?' she said.

Hermione took no notice. Suddenly her face puckered,

'To know, that is your all, that is your life—you have only her brow was knit with thought, she seemed twisted in trouble-this, this knowledge,' he cried. 'There is only one tree, there is some effort for utterance.

only one fruit, in your mouth.'

'Do you really think, Rupert,' she asked, as if Ursula were Again she was some time silent.

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'Is there?' she said at last, with the same untouched calm.

better than this? Better be animals, mere animals with no And then in a tone

of whimsical inquisitiveness: 'What fruit, mind at all, than this, this NOTHINGNESS—'

Rupert?'

'But do you think it is knowledge that makes us unliving

'The eternal apple,' he replied in exasperation, hating his and selfconscious?' he asked irritably.

own metaphors.

She opened her eyes and looked at him slowly.

'Yes,' she said. There was a look of exhaustion about her.

'Yes,' she said. She paused, watching him all the while, her For some moments there was silence. Then, pulling herself eyes vague. Then she wiped her fingers across her brow, with together with a convulsed movement, Hermione resumed, in a vague weariness. It irritated him bitterly. 'It is the mind,'

a sing-song, casual voice:

she said, 'and that is death.' She raised her eyes slowly to him:

'But leaving me apart, Rupert; do you think the children

'Isn't the mind—' she said, with the convulsed movement of are better, richer, happier, for all this knowledge; do you really her body, 'isn't it our death? Doesn't it destroy all our sponta-think they are? Or is it better to leave them untouched, spon-neity, all our instincts? Are not the young people growing up taneous. Hadn't they better be animals, simple animals, crude, today, really dead before they have a chance to live?'

violent, ANYTHING, rather than this selfconsciousness, this

'Not because they have too much mind, but too little,' he incapacity to be spontaneous.'

said brutally.

They thought she had finished. But with a queer rum-

'Are you SURE?' she cried. 'It seems to me the reverse.

bling in her throat she resumed, 'Hadn't they better be any-They are overconscious, burdened to death with conscious-thing than grow up crippled, crippled in their souls, crippled ness.'

in their feelings—so thrown back—so turned back on them-

'Imprisoned within a limited, false set of concepts,' he cried.

selves—incapable—' Hermione clenched her fist like one in a But she took no notice of this, only went on with her own trance—'of any spontaneous action, always deliberate, always rhapsodic interrogation.

burdened with choice, never carried away.'

'When we have knowledge, don't we lose everything but Again they thought she had finished. But just as he was knowledge?' she asked pathetically. 'If I know about the flower, going to reply, she resumed her queer rhapsody —'never car-don't I lose the flower and have only the knowledge? Aren't ried away, out of themselves, always conscious, always self-we exchanging the substance for the shadow, aren't we for-conscious, always aware of themselves. Isn't ANYTHING

feiting life for this dead quality of knowledge? And what

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does it mean to me, after all? What does all this knowing convulsed with fury and violation, speechless, like a stricken mean to me? It means nothing.'

pythoness of the Greek oracle.

'You are merely making words,' he said; 'knowledge means

'But your passion is a lie,' he went on violently. 'It isn't everything to you. Even your animalism, you want it in your passion at all, it is your WILL. It's your bullying will. You head. You don't want to BE an animal, you want to observe want to clutch things and have them in your power. You want your own animal functions, to get a mental thrill out of them.

to have things in your power. And why? Because you haven't It is all purely secondary—and more decadent than the most got any real body, any dark sensual body of life. You have no hide-bound intellectualism. What is it but the worst and last sensuality. You have only your will and your conceit of con-form of intellectualism, this love of yours for passion and the sciousness, and your lust for power, to KNOW.'

animal instincts? Passion and the instincts—you want them He looked at her in mingled hate and contempt, also in hard enough, but through your head, in your consciousness.

pain because she suffered, and in shame because he knew he It all takes place in your head, under that skull of yours. Only tortured her. He had an impulse to kneel and plead for for-you won't be conscious of what ACTUALLY is: you want giveness. But a bitterer red anger burned up to fury in him.

the lie that will match the rest of your furniture.'

He became unconscious of her, he was only a passionate voice Hermione set hard and poisonous against this attack.

speaking.

Ursula stood covered with wonder and shame. It frightened

'Spontaneous!' he cried. 'You and spontaneity! You, the her, to see how they hated each other.

most deliberate thing that ever walked or crawled! You'd be

'It's all that Lady of Shalott business,' he said, in his strong verily deliberately spontaneous—that's you. Because you want abstract voice. He seemed to be charging her before the to have everything in your own volition, your deliberate vol-unseeing air. 'You've got that mirror, your own fixed will, your untary consciousness. You want it all in that loathsome little immortal understanding, your own tight conscious world, and skull of yours, that ought to be cracked like a nut. For you'll there is nothing beyond it. There, in the mirror, you must be the same till it is cracked, like an insect in its skin. If one have everything. But now you have come to all your conclucracked your skull perhaps one might get a spontaneous, passions, you want to go back and be like a savage, without knowl-sionate woman out of you, with real sensuality. As it is, what edge. You want a life of pure sensation and "passion."

you want is pornography—looking at yourself in mirrors, He quoted the last word satirically against her. She sat watching your naked animal actions in mirrors, so that you

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can have it all in your consciousness, make it all mental.'

triumphant female sounded from Hermione, jeering him as There was a sense of violation in the air, as if too much was if he were a neuter.

said, the unforgivable. Yet Ursula was concerned now only

'No,' he said. 'You are the real devil who won't let life ex-with solving her own problems, in the light of his words. She ist.'

was pale and abstracted.

She looked at him with a long, slow look, malevolent, su-

'But do you really WANT sensuality?' she asked, puzzled.

percilious.

Birkin looked at her, and became intent in his explana-

'You know all about it, don't you?' she said, with slow, cold, tion.

cunning mockery.

'Yes,' he said, 'that and nothing else, at this point. It is a

'Enough,' he replied, his face fixing fine and clear like steel.

fulfilment—the great dark knowledge you can't have in your A horrible despair, and at the same time a sense of release, head—the dark involuntary being. It is death to one's self—

liberation, came over Hermione. She turned with a pleasant but it is the coming into being of another.'

intimacy to Ursula.

'But how? How can you have knowledge not in your head?'

'You are sure you will come to Breadalby?' she said, urg-she asked, quite unable to interpret his phrases.

ing.

'In the blood,' he answered; 'when the mind and the known

'Yes, I should like to very much,' replied Ursula.

world is drowned in darkness everything must go—there must Hermione looked down at her, gratified, reflecting, and be the deluge. Then you find yourself a palpable body of strangely absent, as if possessed, as if not quite there.

darkness, a demon—'

'I'm so glad,' she said, pulling herself together. 'Some time

'But why should I be a demon—?' she asked.

in about a fortnight. Yes? I will write to you here, at the

"WOMAN WAILING FOR HER DEMON

school, shall I? Yes. And you'll be sure to come? Yes. I shall LOVER"—' he quoted—'why, I don't know.'

be so glad. Good-bye! Good-bye!'

Hermione roused herself as from a death—annihilation.

Hermione held out her hand and looked into the eyes of

'He is such a DREADFUL satanist, isn't he?' she drawled the other woman. She knew Ursula as an immediate rival, and to Ursula, in a queer resonant

voice, that ended on a shrill the knowledge strangely exhilarated her. Also she was taking little laugh of pure ridicule. The two women were jeering at leave. It always gave her a sense of strength, advantage, to be him, jeering him into nothingness. The laugh of the shrill, departing and leaving the other behind. Moreover she was **Contents**



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taking the man with her, if only in hate.

itself. She could not say what it was. But there was a sense of Birkin stood aside, fixed and unreal. But now, when it was richness and of liberty.

his turn to bid good-bye, he began to speak again.

'But we are sensual enough, without making ourselves so,

'There's the whole difference in the world,' he said, 'be-aren't we?' she asked, turning to him with a certain golden tween the actual sensual being, and the vicious mental-delib-laughter flickering under her greenish eyes, like a challenge.

erate profligacy our lot goes in for. In our night-time, there's And immediately the queer, careless, terribly attractive smile always the electricity switched on, we watch ourselves, we get came over his eyes and brows, though his mouth did not re-it all in the head, really. You've got to lapse out before you can lax.

know what sensual reality is, lapse into unknowingness, and

'No,' he said, 'we aren't. We're too full of ourselves.'

give up your volition. You've got to do it. You've got to learn

'Surely it isn't a matter of conceit,' she cried.

not-to-be, before you can come into being.

'That and nothing else.'

'But we have got such a conceit of ourselves—that's where She was frankly puzzled.

it is. We are so conceited, and so unproud. We've got no pride,

'Don't you think that people are most conceited of all about we're all conceit, so conceited in our own papier-mache realised their sensual powers?' she asked.

selves. We'd rather die than give up our little self-righteous

'That's why they aren't sensual—only sensuous—which is self-opinionated self-will.'

another matter. They're ALWAYS aware of themselves—and There was silence in the room. Both women were hostile they're so conceited, that rather than release themselves, and and resentful. He sounded as if he were addressing a meeting.

live in another world, from another centre, they'd—'

Hermione merely paid no attention, stood with her shoulders

'You want your tea, don't you,' said Hermione, turning to tight in a shrug of dislike.

Ursula with a gracious kindliness. 'You've worked all day—'

Ursula was watching him as if furtively, not really aware of Birkin stopped short. A spasm of anger and chagrin went what she was seeing. There was a great physical attractiveness over Ursula. His face set. And he bade goodbye, as if he had in him—a curious hidden richness, that came through his ceased to notice her.

thinness and his pallor like another voice, conveying another They were gone. Ursula stood looking at the door for some knowledge of him. It was in the curves of his brows and his moments. Then she put out the lights. And having done so, chin, rich, fine, exquisite curves, the powerful beauty of life she sat down again in her chair, absorbed and lost. And then **Contents**



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she began to cry, bitterly, bitterly weeping: but whether for misery or joy, she never knew.

Chapter 4.

Diver.

The week passed away. On the Saturday it rained, a soft drizzling rain that held off at times. In one of the intervals Gudrun and Ursula set out for a walk, going towards Willey Water. The atmosphere was grey and translucent, the birds sang sharply on the young twigs, the earth would be quickening and hastening in growth. The two girls walked swiftly, gladly, because of the soft, subtle rush of morning that filled the wet haze. By the road the black-thorn was in blossom, white and wet, its tiny amber grains burning faintly in the

white smoke of blossom. Purple twigs were darkly luminous in the grey air, high hedges glowed like living shadows, hovering nearer, coming into creation. The morning was full of a new creation.

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When the sisters came to Willey Water, the lake lay all woods.

grey and visionary, stretching into the moist, translucent vista

'Don't you wish it were you?' asked Gudrun, looking at of trees and meadow. Fine electric activity in sound came from Ursula.

the dumbles below the road, the birds piping one against the

'I do,' said Ursula. 'But I'm not sure—it's so wet.'

other, and water mysteriously plashing, issuing from the lake.

'No,' said Gudrun, reluctantly. She stood watching the The two girls drifted swiftly along. In front of them, at motion on the bosom of the water, as if fascinated. He, having the corner of the lake, near the road, was a mossy boat-house swum a certain distance, turned round and was swimming on under a walnut tree, and a little landing-stage where a boat his back, looking along the water at the two girls by the wall.

was moored, wavering like a shadow on the still grey water, In the faint wash of motion, they could see his ruddy face, below the green, decayed poles. All was shadowy with com-and could feel him watching them.

ing summer.

'It is Gerald Crich,' said Ursula.

Suddenly, from the boat-house, a white figure ran out,

'I know,' replied Gudrun.

frightening in its swift sharp transit, across the old landing-And she stood motionless gazing over the water at the stage. It launched in a white arc through the air, there was a face which washed up and down on the flood, as he swam bursting of the water, and among the smooth ripples a swimsteadily. From his separate element he saw them and he ex-mer was making out to space, in a centre of faintly heaving ulted to himself because of his own advantage, his possession motion. The whole otherworld, wet and remote, he had to of a world to himself. He was immune and perfect. He loved himself. He could move into the pure translucency of the his own vigorous, thrusting motion, and the violent impulse grey, uncreated water.

of the very cold water against his limbs, buoying him up. He Gudrun stood by the stone wall, watching.

could see the girls watching him a way off, outside, and that

'How I envy him,' she said, in low, desirous tones.

pleased him. He lifted his arm from the water, in a sign to

'Ugh!' shivered Ursula. 'So cold!'

them.

'Yes, but how good, how really fine, to swim out there!'

'He is waving,' said Ursula.

The sisters stood watching the swimmer move further into

'Yes,' replied Gudrun. They watched him. He waved again, the grey, moist, full space of the water, pulsing with his own with a strange movement of recognition across the difference.

small, invading motion, and arched over with mist and dim

'Like a Nibelung,' laughed Ursula. Gudrun said nothing,

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only stood still looking over the water.

She was so hot, so flushed, so furious, that Ursula was Gerald suddenly turned, and was swimming away swiftly, puzzled.

with a side stroke. He was alone now, alone and immune in The two sisters went on, up the road. They were passing the middle of the waters, which he had all to himself. He between the trees just below Shortlands. They looked up at exulted in his isolation in the new element, unquestioned the long, low house, dim and glamorous in the wet morning, and unconditioned. He was happy, thrusting with his legs its cedar trees slanting before the windows. Gudrun seemed and all his body, without bond or connection anywhere, just to be studying it closely.

himself in the watery world.

'Don't you think it's attractive, Ursula?' asked Gudrun.

Gudrun envied him almost painfully. Even this momen-

'Very,' said Ursula. 'Very peaceful and charming.'

tary possession of pure isolation and fluidity seemed to her so

'It has form, too—it has a period.'

terribly desirable that she felt herself as if damned, out there

'What period?'

on the highroad.

'Oh, eighteenth century, for certain; Dorothy Wordsworth

'God, what it is to be a man!' she cried.

and Jane Austen, don't you think?'

'What?' exclaimed Ursula in surprise.

Ursula laughed.

'The freedom, the liberty, the mobility!' cried Gudrun,

'Don't you think so?' repeated Gudrun.

strangely flushed and brilliant. 'You're a man, you want to do

'Perhaps. But I don't think the Criches fit the period. I a thing, you do it. You haven't the THOUSAND obstacles a know Gerald is putting in a private electric plant, for lighting woman has in front of her.'

the house, and is making all kinds of latest improvements.'

Ursula wondered what was in Gudrun's mind, to occasion Gudrun shrugged her shoulders swiftly.

this outburst. She could not understand.

'Of course,' she said, 'that's quite inevitable.'

'What do you want to do?' she asked.

'Quite,' laughed Ursula. 'He is several generations of

'Nothing,' cried Gudrun, in swift refutation. 'But sup-youngness at one go. They hate him for it. He takes them all posing I did. Supposing I want to swim up that water. It is by the scruff of the neck, and fairly flings them along. He'll impossible, it is one of the impossibilities of life, for me to have to die soon, when he's made every possible improvement, take my clothes off now and jump in. But isn't it RIDICU-and there will be nothing more to improve. He's got GO, LOUS, doesn't it simply prevent our living!'

anyhow.'

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'Certainly, he's got go,' said Gudrun. 'In fact I've never frightening! Oh, it's one of the things I can't bear. Murder, seen a man that showed signs of so much. The unfortunate that is thinkable, because there's a will behind it. But

a thing thing is, where does his GO go to, what becomes of it?'

like that to HAPPEN to one—'

'Oh I know,' said Ursula. 'It goes in applying the latest

'Perhaps there WAS an unconscious will behind it,' said appliances!'

Ursula. 'This playing at killing has some primitive DESIRE

'Exactly,' said Gudrun.

for killing in it, don't you think?'

'You know he shot his brother?' said Ursula.

'Desire!' said Gudrun, coldly, stiffening a little. 'I can't see

'Shot his brother?' cried Gudrun, frowning as if in disap-that they were even playing at killing. I suppose one boy said probation.

to the other, "You look down the barrel while I pull the trig-

'Didn't you know? Oh yes!—I thought you knew. He and ger, and see what happens." It seems to me the purest form of his brother were playing together with a gun. He told his accident.'

brother to look down the gun, and it was loaded, and blew

'No,' said Ursula. 'I couldn't pull the trigger of the empti-the top of his head off. Isn't it a horrible story?'

est gun in the world, not if someone were looking down the

'How fearful!' cried Gudrun. 'But it is long ago?'

barrel. One instinctively doesn't do it—one can't.'

'Oh yes, they were quite boys,' said Ursula. 'I think it is Gudrun was silent

for some moments, in sharp disagree-one of the most horrible stories I know.' ment.

'And he of course did not know that the gun was loaded?'

'Of course,' she said coldly. 'If one is a woman, and grown

'Yes. You see it was an old thing that had been lying in the up, one's instinct prevents one. But I cannot see how that stable for years. Nobody dreamed it would ever go off, and of applies to a couple of boys playing together.'

course, no one imagined it was loaded. But isn't it dreadful, Her voice was cold and angry.

that it should happen?'

'Yes,' persisted Ursula. At that moment they heard a

'Frightful!' cried Gudrun. 'And isn't it horrible too to think woman's voice a few yards off say loudly:

of such a thing happening to one, when one was a child, and

'Oh damn the thing!' They went forward and saw Laura having to carry the responsibility of it all through one's life.

Crich and Hermione Roddice in the field on the other side of Imagine it, two boys playing together—then this comes upon the hedge, and Laura Crich struggling with the gate, to get them, for no reason whatever—out of the air. Ursula, it's very out. Ursula at once hurried up and helped to lift the gate.

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'Thanks so much,' said Laura, looking up flushed and the privilege.'

amazon-like, yet rather confused. 'It isn't right on the hinges.'

'I can't understand, Ursula, what you are so much put out

'No,' said Ursula. 'And they're so heavy.'

about,' said Gudrun, in some exasperation. 'One knows those

'Surprising!' cried Laura.

women are impudent—these free women who have emanci-

'How do you do,' sang Hermione, from out of the field, pated themselves from the aristocracy.'

the moment she could make her voice heard. 'It's nice now.

'But it is so UNNECESSARY—so vulgar,' cried Ursula.

Are you going for a walk? Yes. Isn't the young green beauti-

'No, I don't see it. And if I did—pour moi, elle n'existe ful? So beautiful—quite burning. Good morning—good pas. I don't grant her the power to be impudent to me.'

morning—you'll come and see me?—thank you so much—

'Do you think she likes you?' asked Ursula.

next week—yes—good-bye, g-o-o-d b-y-e.'

'Well, no, I shouldn't think she did.'

Gudrun and Ursula stood and watched her slowly waving

'Then why does she ask you to go to Breadalby and stay her head up and down, and waving her hand slowly in dis-with her?'

missal, smiling a strange affected smile, making a tall queer, Gudrun lifted her shoulders in a low shrug.

frightening figure, with her heavy fair hair slipping to her

'After all, she's got the sense to know we're not just the eyes. Then they moved off, as if they had been dismissed like ordinary run,' said Gudrun. 'Whatever she is, she's not a fool.

inferiors. The four women parted.

And I'd rather have somebody I detested, than the ordinary As soon as they had gone far enough, Ursula said, her cheeks woman who keeps to her own set. Hermione Roddice does burning,

risk herself in some respects.'

'I do think she's impudent.'

Ursula pondered this for a time.

'Who, Hermione Roddice?' asked Gudrun. 'Why?'

'I doubt it,' she replied. 'Really she risks nothing. I sup-

'The way she treats one—impudence!'

pose we ought to admire her for knowing she CAN invite

'Why, Ursula, what did you notice that was so impudent?'

us—school teachers—and risk nothing.'

asked Gudrun rather coldly.

'Precisely!' said Gudrun. 'Think of the myriads of women

'Her whole manner. Oh, It's impossible, the way she tries that daren't do it. She makes the most of her privileges—

to bully one. Pure bullying. She's an impudent woman. "You'll that's something. I suppose, really, we should do the same, in come and see me," as if we should be falling over ourselves for her place.'

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'No,' said Ursula. 'No. It would bore me. I couldn't spend like Corneille, after it.'

my time playing her games. It's infra dig.'

Gudrun was becoming flushed and excited over her own The two sisters were like a pair of scissors, snipping off cleverness.

everything that came athwart them; or like a knife and a whet-

'Strut,' said Ursula. 'One wants to strut, to be a swan among stone, the one sharpened against the other.

geese.'

'Of course,' cried Ursula suddenly, 'she ought to thank her

'Exactly,' cried Gudrun, 'a swan among geese.'

stars if we will go and see her. You are perfectly beautiful, a

'They are all so busy playing the ugly duckling,' cried thousand times more beautiful than ever she is or was, and to Ursula, with mocking laughter. 'And I don't feel a bit like a my thinking, a thousand times more beautifully dressed, for humble and pathetic ugly duckling. I do feel like a swan among she never looks fresh and natural, like a flower, always old, geese—I can't help it. They make one feel so. And I don't care thought-out; and we ARE more intelligent than most people.'

what THEY think of me. FE M'EN FICHE.'

'Undoubtedly!' said Gudrun.

Gudrun looked up at Ursula with a queer, uncertain envy

'And it ought to be admitted, simply,' said Ursula.

and dislike.

'Certainly it ought,' said Gudrun. 'But you'll find that

'Of course, the only thing to do is to despise them all—

the really chic thing is to be so absolutely ordinary, so per-just all,' she said.

fectly commonplace and like the person in the street, that The sisters went home again, to read and talk and work, you really are a masterpiece of humanity, not the person in and wait for Monday, for school. Ursula often wondered what the street actually, but the artistic creation of her—'

else she waited for, besides the beginning and end of the school

'How awful!' cried Ursula.

week, and the beginning and end of the holidays. This was a

'Yes, Ursula, it IS awful, in most respects. You daren't be whole life! Sometimes she had periods of tight horror, when anything that isn't amazingly A TERRE, SO much A TERRE

it seemed to her that her life would pass away, and be gone, that it is the artistic creation of ordinariness.'

without having been more than this. But she never really ac-

'It's very dull to create oneself into nothing better,' laughed cepted it. Her spirit was active, her life like a shoot that is Ursula.

growing steadily, but which has not yet come above ground.

'Very dull!' retorted Gudrun. 'Really Ursula, it is dull, that's just the word. One longs to be high-flown, and make speeches

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external surroundings. There seemed to be a dual consciousness running in him. He was thinking vigorously of something he read in the newspaper, and at the same time his eye ran over the surfaces of the life round him, and he missed nothing. Birkin, who was watching him, was irritated by his duality. He noticed too, that Gerald seemed always to be at bay against everybody, in spite of his queer, genial, social manner when roused.

Now Birkin started violently at seeing this genial look flash Chapter 5.

on to Gerald's face, at seeing Gerald approaching with hand outstretched.

In the train.

'Hallo, Rupert, where are you going?'

'London. So are you, I suppose.'

One day at this time Birkin was called to London. He was

'Yes—'

not very fixed in his abode. He had rooms in Nottingham, Gerald's eyes went over Birkin's face in curiosity.

because his work lay chiefly in that town. But often he was in

'We'll travel together if you like,' he said.

London, or in Oxford. He moved about a great deal, his life

'Don't you usually go first?' asked Birkin.

seemed uncertain, without any definite rhythm, any organic

'I can't stand the crowd,' replied Gerald. 'But third'll be meaning.

all right. There's a restaurant car, we can have some tea.'

On the platform of the railway station he saw Gerald Crich, The two men looked at the station clock, having nothing reading a newspaper, and evidently waiting for the train. Birkin further to say.

stood some distance off, among the people. It was against his

'What were you reading in the paper?' Birkin asked.

instinct to approach anybody.

Gerald looked at him quickly.

From time to time, in a manner characteristic of him, Gerald

'Isn't it funny, what they DO put in the newspapers,' he lifted his head and looked round. Even though he was read-said. 'Here are two leaders—' he held out his DAILY TELE-ing the newspaper closely, he must keep a watchful eye on his GRAPH, 'full of the ordinary newspaper cant—' he scanned **Contents**



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the columns down—'and then there's this little—I dunno want to get rid of the old, before anything new will appear—

what you'd call it, essay, almost—appearing with the leaders, even in the self.'

and saying there must arise a man who will give new values to Gerald watched him closely.

things, give us new truths, a new attitude to life, or else we

'You think we ought to break up this life, just start and let shall be a crumbling nothingness in a few years, a country in fly?' he asked.

ruin—'

'This life. Yes I do. We've got to bust it completely, or

'I suppose that's a bit of newspaper cant, as well,' said shrivel inside it, as in a tight skin. For it won't expand any Birkin.

more.'

'It sounds as if the man meant it, and quite genuinely,'

There was a queer little smile in Gerald's eyes, a look of said Gerald.

amusement, calm and curious.

'Give it to me,' said Birkin, holding out his hand for the

'And how do you propose to begin? I suppose you mean, paper.

reform the whole order of society?' he asked.

The train came, and they went on board, sitting on either Birkin had a slight, tense frown between the brows. He side a little table, by the window, in the restaurant car. Birkin too was impatient of the conversation.

glanced over his paper, then looked up at Gerald, who was

'I don't propose at all,' he replied. 'When we really want waiting for him.

to go for something better, we shall smash the old. Until then,

'I believe the man means it,' he said, 'as far as he means any sort of proposal, or making proposals, is no more than a anything.'

tiresome game for self-important people.'

'And do you think it's true? Do you think we really want a The little smile began to die out of Gerald's eyes, and he new gospel?' asked Gerald.

said, looking with a cool stare at Birkin:

Birkin shrugged his shoulders.

'So you really think things are very bad?'

'I think the people who say they want a new religion are

'Completely bad.'

the last to accept anything new. They want novelty right The smile appeared again.

enough. But to stare straight at this life that we've brought

'In what way?'

upon ourselves, and reject it, absolutely smash up the old idols

'Every way,' said Birkin. 'We are such dreary liars. Our of ourselves, that we sh'll never do. You've got very badly to one idea is to lie to ourselves. We have an ideal of a perfect

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world, clean and straight and sufficient. So we cover the earth you work so hard at the mines. If you can produce coal to with foulness; life is a blotch of labour, like insects scurrying cook five thousand dinners a day, you are five thousand times in filth, so that your collier can have a pianoforte in his parlour, more important than if you cooked only your own dinner.'

and you can have a butler and a motor-car in your up-to-date

'I suppose I am,' laughed Gerald.

house, and as a nation we can sport the Ritz, or the Empire,

'Can't you see,' said Birkin, 'that to help my neighbour to Gaby Deslys and the Sunday newspapers. It is very dreary.'

eat is no more than eating myself. "I eat, thou eatest, he eats, Gerald took a little time to readjust himself after this we eat, you eat, they eat"—and what then? Why should ev-tirade.

ery man decline the whole verb. First person singular is enough

'Would you have us live without houses—return to na-for me.'

ture?' he asked.

'You've got to start with material things,' said Gerald.

'I would have nothing at all. People only do what they Which statement Birkin ignored.

want to do—and what they are capable of doing. If they were

'And we've got to live for SOMETHING, we're not just capable of anything else, there would be something else.'

cattle that can graze and have done with it,' said Gerald.

Again Gerald pondered. He was not going to take offence

'Tell me,' said Birkin. 'What do you live for?'

at Birkin.

Gerald's face went baffled.

'Don't you think the collier's PIANOFORTE, as you call

'What do I live for?' he repeated. 'I suppose I live to work, it, is a symbol for something very real, a real desire for some-to produce something, in so far as I am a purposive being.

thing higher, in the collier's life?'

Apart from that, I live because I am living.'

'Higher!' cried Birkin. 'Yes. Amazing heights of upright

'And what's your work? Getting so many more thousands grandeur. It makes him so much higher in his neighbouring of tons of coal out of the earth every day. And when we've got collier's eyes. He sees himself reflected in the neighbouring all the coal we want, and all the plush furniture, and pianopinion, like in a Brocken mist, several feet taller on the strength fortes, and the rabbits are all stewed and eaten, and we're all of the pianoforte, and he is satisfied. He lives for the sake of warm and our bellies are filled and we're listening to the young that Brocken spectre, the reflection of himself in the human lady performing on the pianoforte—what then? What then, opinion. You do the same. If you are of high importance to when you've made a real fair start with your material things?'

humanity you are of high importance to yourself. That is why Gerald sat laughing at the words and the mocking humour

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of the other man. But he was cogitating too.

as the train ran on. In Birkin's face was a little irritable ten-

'We haven't got there yet,' he replied. 'A good many people sion, a sharp knitting of the brows, keen and difficult. Gerald are still waiting for the rabbit and the fire to cook it.'

watched him warily, carefully, rather calculatingly, for he could

'So while you get the coal I must chase the rabbit?' said not decide what he was after.

Birkin, mocking at Gerald.

Suddenly Birkin's eyes looked straight and overpowering

'Something like that,' said Gerald.

into those of the other man.

Birkin watched him narrowly. He saw the perfect good-

'What do you think is the aim and object of your life, humoured callousness, even strange, glistening malice, in Gerald?' he asked.

Gerald, glistening through the plausible ethics of productiv-Again Gerald was taken aback. He could not think what ity.

his friend was getting at. Was he poking fun, or not?

'Gerald,' he said, 'I rather hate you.'

'At this moment, I couldn't say offhand,' he replied, with

'I know you do,' said Gerald. 'Why do you?'

faintly ironic humour.

Birkin mused inscrutably for some minutes.

'Do you think love is the be-all and the end-all of life?'

'I should like to know if you are conscious of hating me,'

Birkin asked, with direct, attentive seriousness.

he said at last. 'Do you ever consciously detest me—hate me

'Of my own life?' said Gerald.

with mystic hate? There are odd moments when I hate you

'Yes.'

starrily.'

There was a really puzzled pause.

Gerald was rather taken aback, even a little disconcerted.

'I can't say,' said Gerald. 'It hasn't been, so far.'

He did not quite know what to say.

'What has your life been, so far?'

'I may, of course, hate you sometimes,' he said. 'But I'm

'Oh—finding out things for myself—and getting experi-not aware of it—never acutely aware of it, that is.'

ences—and making things GO.'

'So much the worse,' said Birkin.

Birkin knitted his brows like sharply moulded steel.

Gerald watched him with curious eyes. He could not quite

'I find,' he said, 'that one needs some one REALLY pure make him out.

single activity—I should call love a single pure activity. But I

'So much the worse, is it?' he repeated.

DON'T really love anybody—not now.'

There was a silence between the two men for some time,

'Have you ever really loved anybody?' asked Gerald.

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'Yes and no,' replied Birkin.

'You don't? Then wherein does life centre, for you?'

'Not finally?' said Gerald.

'I don't know—that's what I want somebody to tell me.

'Finally—finally—no,' said Birkin.

As far as I can make out, it doesn't centre at all. It is artifi-

'Nor I,' said Gerald.

cially held TOGETHER by the social mechanism.'

'And do you want to?' said Birkin.

Birkin pondered as if he would crack something.

Gerald looked with a long, twinkling, almost sardonic look

'I know,' he said, 'it just doesn't centre. The old ideals are into the eyes of the other man.

dead as nails—nothing there. It seems to me there remains

'I don't know,' he said.

only this perfect union with a woman—sort of ultimate mar-

'I do—I want to love,' said Birkin.

riage—and there isn't anything else.'

'You do?'

'And you mean if there isn't the woman, there's nothing?'

'Yes. I want the finality of love.'

said Gerald.

'The finality of love,' repeated Gerald. And he waited for

'Pretty well that—seeing there's no God.'

a moment.

'Then we're hard put to it,' said Gerald. And he turned to

'Just one woman?' he added. The evening light, flooding look out of the window at the flying, golden landscape.

yellow along the fields, lit up Birkin's face with a tense, ab-Birkin could not help seeing how beautiful and soldierly stract steadfastness. Gerald still could not make it out.

his face was, with a certain courage to be indifferent.

'Yes, one woman,' said Birkin.

'You think its heavy odds against us?' said Birkin.

But to Gerald it sounded as if he were insistent rather

'If we've got to make our life up out of a woman, one than confident.

woman, woman only, yes, I do,' said Gerald. 'I don't believe I

'I don't believe a woman, and nothing but a woman, will shall ever make up MY life, at that rate.'

ever make my life,' said Gerald.

Birkin watched him almost angrily.

'Not the centre and core of it—the love between you and

'You are a born unbeliever,' he said.

a woman?' asked Birkin.

'I only feel what I feel,' said Gerald. And he looked again Gerald's eyes narrowed with a queer dangerous smile as he at Birkin almost sardonically, with his blue, manly, sharp-watched the other man. lighted eyes. Birkin's eyes were at the moment full of anger.

'I never quite feel it that way,' he said.

But swiftly they became troubled, doubtful, then full of a

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warm, rich affectionateness and laughter.

kind passes away, it will only mean that this particular ex-

'It troubles me very much, Gerald,' he said, wrinkling his pression is completed and done. That which is expressed, and brows.

that which is to be expressed, cannot be diminished. There it

'I can see it does,' said Gerald, uncovering his mouth in a is, in the shining evening. Let mankind pass away—time it manly, quick, soldierly laugh.

did. The creative utterances will not cease, they will only be Gerald was held unconsciously by the other man. He there. Humanity doesn't embody the utterance of the incom-wanted to be near him, he wanted to be within his sphere of prehensible any more. Humanity is a dead letter. There will influence. There was something very congenial to him in be a new embodiment, in a new way. Let humanity disappear Birkin. But yet, beyond

this, he did not take much notice. He as quick as possible.'

felt that he, himself, Gerald, had harder and more durable Gerald interrupted him by asking,

truths than any the other man knew. He felt himself older,

'Where are you staying in London?'

more knowing. It was the quick-changing warmth and venal-Birkin looked up.

ity and brilliant warm utterance he loved in his friend. It was

'With a man in Soho. I pay part of the rent of a flat, and the rich play of words and quick interchange of feelings he stop there when I like.'

enjoyed. The real content of the words he never really consid-

'Good idea—have a place more or less your own,' said ered: he himself knew better.

Gerald.

Birkin knew this. He knew that Gerald wanted to be

'Yes. But I don't care for it much. I'm tired of the people I FOND of him without taking him seriously. And this made am bound to find there.'

him go hard and cold. As the train ran on, he sat looking at

'What kind of people?'

the land, and Gerald fell away, became as nothing to him.

'Art—music—London Bohemia—the most pettifogging Birkin looked at the land, at the evening, and was think-calculating Bohemia that ever reckoned its pennies. But there ing: 'Well, if mankind is destroyed, if our race is destroyed are a few decent people, decent in some respects. They are like

Sodom, and there is this beautiful evening with the lu-really very thorough rejecters of the world—perhaps they live minous land and trees, I am satisfied. That which informs it only in the gesture of rejection and negation—but negatively all is there, and can never be lost. After all, what is mankind something, at any rate.'

but just one expression of the incomprehensible. And if man-

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'Painters, musicians, writers—hangers-on, models, advanced

'Oh yes—well, shall I come round there?'

young people, anybody who is openly at outs with the con-

'By all means, it might amuse you.'

ventions, and belongs to nowhere particularly. They are often The evening was falling. They had passed Bedford. Birkin young fellows down from the University, and girls who are watched the country, and was filled with a sort of hopeless-living their own lives, as they say.'

ness. He always felt this, on approaching London.

'All loose?' said Gerald.

His dislike of mankind, of the mass of mankind, amounted Birkin could see his curiosity roused.

almost to an illness.

'In one way. Most bound, in another. For all their

"Where the quiet coloured end of evening smiles Miles shockingness, all on one note."

and miles—"' he was murmuring to himself, like a man con-He looked at Gerald, and saw how his blue eyes were lit demned to death. Gerald, who was very subtly alert, wary in up with a little flame of curious desire. He saw too how good-all his senses, leaned forward and asked smilingly: looking he was. Gerald was attractive, his blood seemed fluid 'What were you saying?' Birkin glanced at him, laughed, and electric. His blue eyes burned with a keen, yet cold light, and repeated:

there was a certain beauty, a beautiful passivity in all his body,

"Where the quiet coloured end of evening smiles, Miles his moulding.

and miles, Over pastures where the something something sheep

"We might see something of each other—I am in London Half asleep—"

for two or three days,' said Gerald.

Gerald also looked now at the country. And Birkin, who,

'Yes,' said Birkin, 'I don't want to go to the theatre, or the for some reason was now tired and dispirited, said to him: music hall—you'd better come round to the flat, and see what

'I always feel doomed when the train is running into Lon-you can make of Halliday and his crowd.'

don. I feel such a despair, so hopeless, as if it were the end of

'Thanks—I should like to,' laughed Gerald. 'What are the world.'

you doing tonight?'

'Really!' said Gerald. 'And does the end of the world

'I promised to meet Halliday at the Pompadour. It's a bad frighten you?'

place, but there is nowhere else.'

Birkin lifted his shoulders in a slow shrug.

'Where is it?' asked Gerald.

'I don't know,' he said. 'It does while it hangs imminent

'Piccadilly Circus.'

and doesn't fall. But people give me a bad feeling—very bad.'

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There was a roused glad smile in Gerald's eyes.

'Do they?' he said. And he watched the other man critically.

In a few minutes the train was running through the dis-grace of outspread London. Everybody in the carriage was on the alert, waiting to escape. At last they were under the huge arch of the station, in the tremendous shadow of the town.

Birkin shut himself together—he was in now.

The two men went together in a taxi-cab.

'Don't you feel like one of the damned?' asked Birkin, as they sat in a little, swiftly-running enclosure, and watched Chapter 6.

the hideous great street.

Creme de menthe.

'No,' laughed Gerald.

'It is real death,' said Birkin.

They met again in the cafe several hours later. Gerald went through the push doors into the large, lofty room where the faces and heads of the drinkers showed dimly through the haze of smoke, reflected more dimly, and repeated ad infinitum in the great mirrors on the walls, so that one seemed to enter a vague, dim world of shadowy drinkers humming within an atmosphere of blue tobacco smoke. There was, however, the red plush of the seats to give substance within the bubble of pleasure.

Gerald moved in his slow, observant, glistening-attentive motion down between the tables and the people whose shadowy faces looked up as he passed. He seemed to be entering in some strange element, passing into an illuminated new re-

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gion, among a host of licentious souls. He was pleased, and pronunciation which was at once affected and true to her char-entertained. He looked over all the dim, evanescent, strangely acter. Her voice was dull and toneless.

illuminated faces that bent across the tables. Then he saw

'Where is he then?' asked Birkin.

Birkin rise and signal to him.

'He's doing a private show at Lady Snellgrove's,' said the At Birkin's table was a girl with dark, soft, fluffy hair cut girl. 'Warens is there too.'

short in the artist fashion, hanging level and full almost like There was a pause.

the Egyptian princess's. She was small and delicately made,

'Well, then,' said Birkin, in a dispassionate protective man-with warm colouring and large, dark hostile eyes. There was a ner, 'what do you intend to do?'

delicacy, almost a beauty in all her form, and at the same time The girl paused sullenly. She hated the question.

a certain attractive grossness of spirit, that made a little spark

'I don't intend to do anything,' she replied. 'I shall look for leap instantly alight in Gerald's eyes.

some sittings tomorrow.'

Birkin, who looked muted, unreal, his presence left out,

'Who shall you go to?' asked Birkin.

introduced her as Miss Darrington. She gave her hand with a

'I shall go to Bentley's first. But I believe he's angwy with sudden, unwilling movement, looking all the while at Gerald me for running away.'

with a dark, exposed stare. A glow came over him as he sat

'That is from the Madonna?'

down.

'Yes. And then if he doesn't want me, I know I can get The waiter appeared. Gerald glanced at the glasses of the work with Carmarthen.'

other two. Birkin was drinking something green, Miss

'Carmarthen?'

Darrington had a small liqueur glass that was empty save for

'Lord Carmarthen—he does photographs.'

a tiny drop.

'Chiffon and shoulders—'

'Won't you have some more—?'

'Yes. But he's awfully decent.' There was a pause.

'Brandy,' she said, sipping her last drop and putting down

'And what are you going to do about Julius?' he asked.

the glass. The waiter disappeared.

'Nothing,' she said. 'I shall just ignore him.'

'No,' she said to Birkin. 'He doesn't know I'm back. He'll

'You've done with him altogether?' But she turned aside be terrified when he sees me here.'

her face sullenly, and did not answer the question.

She spoke her r's like w's, lisping with a slightly babyish Another young man came hurrying up to the table.

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'Hallo Birkin! Hallo PUSSUM, when did you come back?'

'I can hardly say,' he laughed. 'I've been up a good many he said eagerly.

times, but I was never in this place before.'

'Today.'

'You're not an artist, then?' she said, in a tone that placed

'Does Halliday know?'

him an outsider.

'I don't know. I don't care either.'

'No,' he replied.

'Ha-ha! The wind still sits in that quarter, does it? Do you

'He's a soldier, and an explorer, and a Napoleon of indus-mind if I come over to this table?'

try,' said Birkin, giving Gerald his credentials for Bohemia.

'I'm talking to Wupert, do you mind?' she replied, coolly

'Are you a soldier?' asked the girl, with a cold yet lively and yet appealingly, like a child.

curiosity.

'Open confession—good for the soul, eh?' said the young

'No, I resigned my commission,' said Gerald, 'some years man. 'Well, so long.'

ago.'

And giving a sharp look at Birkin and at Gerald, the young

'He was in the last war,' said Birkin.

man moved off, with a swing of his coat skirts.

'Were you really?' said the girl.

All this time Gerald had been completely ignored. And

'And then he explored the Amazon,' said Birkin, 'and now yet he felt that the girl was physically aware of his proximity.

he is ruling over coal-mines.'

He waited, listened, and tried to piece together the conversa-The girl looked at Gerald with steady, calm curiosity. He tion.

laughed, hearing himself described. He felt proud too, full of

'Are you staying at the flat?' the girl asked, of Birkin.

male strength. His blue, keen eyes were lit up with laughter,

'For three days,' replied Birkin. 'And you?'

his ruddy face, with its sharp fair hair, was full of satisfaction,

'I don't know yet. I can always go to Bertha's.' There was a and glowing with life. He piqued her.

silence.

'How long are you staying?' she asked him.

Suddenly the girl turned to Gerald, and said, in a rather

'A day or two,' he replied. 'But there is no particular hurry.'

formal, polite voice, with the distant manner of a woman who Still she stared into his face with that slow, full gaze which accepts her position as a social inferior, yet assumes intimate was so curious and so exciting to him. He was acutely and CAMARADERIE with the male she addresses: delightfully conscious of himself, of his own attractiveness.

'Do you know London well?'

He felt full of strength, able to give off a sort of electric power.

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And he was aware of her dark, hot-looking eyes upon him.

Gerald watched her dark, soft hair swing over her ears. He felt She had beautiful eyes, dark, fully-opened, hot, naked in their her watching intensely the man who was approaching, so he looking at him. And on them there seemed to float a film of looked too. He saw a pale, full-built young man with rather disintegration, a sort of misery and sullenness, like oil on wa-long, solid fair hair hanging from under his black hat, moving ter. She wore no hat in the heated cafe, her loose, simple jumper cumbrously down the room, his face lit up with a smile at was strung on a string round her neck. But it was made of once naive and warm, and vapid. He approached towards rich peach-coloured crepe-de-chine, that hung heavily and Birkin, with a haste of welcome.

softly from her young throat and her slender wrists. Her ap-It was not till he was quite close that he perceived the girl.

pearance was simple and complete, really beautiful, because He recoiled, went pale, and said, in a high squealing voice: of her regularity and form, her soft dark hair falling full and

'Pussum, what are YOU doing here?'

level on either side of her head, her straight, small, softened The cafe looked up like animals when they hear a cry.

features, Egyptian in the slight fulness of their curves, her Halliday hung motionless, an almost imbecile smile flicker-slender neck and the simple, rich-coloured smock hanging on ing palely on his face. The girl only stared at him with a black her slender shoulders. She was very still, almost null, in her

look in which flared an unfathomable hell of knowledge, and manner, apart and watchful.

a certain impotence. She was limited by him.

She appealed to Gerald strongly. He felt an awful, enjoy-

'Why have you come back?' repeated Halliday, in the same able power over her, an instinctive cherishing very near to high, hysterical voice. 'I told you not to come back.'

cruelty. For she was a victim. He felt that she was in his power, The girl did not answer, only stared in the same viscous, and he was generous. The electricity was turgid and volup-heavy fashion, straight at him, as he stood recoiled, as if for tuously rich, in his limbs. He would be able to destroy her safety, against the next table.

utterly in the strength of his discharge. But she was waiting

'You know you wanted her to come back—come and sit in her separation, given.

down,' said Birkin to him.

They talked banalities for some time. Suddenly Birkin said:

'No I didn't want her to come back, and I told her not to

'There's Julius!' and he half rose to his feet, motioning to come back. What have you come for, Pussum?'

the newcomer. The girl, with a curious, almost evil motion,

'For nothing from YOU,' she said in a heavy voice of re-looked round over her shoulder without moving her body.

sentment.

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'Then why have you come back at ALL?' cried Halliday,

'Aren't there really?' she said. 'Oh, I thought savages were his voice rising to a kind of squeal.

all so dangerous, they'd have your life before you could look

'She comes as she likes,' said Birkin. 'Are you going to sit round.'

down, or are you not?'

'Did you?' he laughed. 'They are overrated, savages. They're

'No, I won't sit down with Pussum,' cried Halliday.

too much like other people, not exciting, after the first ac-

'I won't hurt you, you needn't be afraid,' she said to him, quaintance.'

very curtly, and yet with a sort of protectiveness towards him,

'Oh, it's not so very wonderfully brave then, to be an ex-in her voice.

plorer?'

Halliday came and sat at the table, putting his hand on

'No. It's more a question of hardships than of terrors.'

his heart, and crying:

'Oh! And weren't you ever afraid?'

'Oh, it's given me such a turn! Pussum, I wish you wouldn't

'In my life? I don't know. Yes, I'm afraid of some things—

do these things. Why did you come back?'

of being shut up, locked up anywhere—or being fastened.

'Not for anything from you,' she repeated.

I'm afraid of being bound hand and foot.'

'You've said that before,' he cried in a high voice.

She looked at him steadily with her dark eyes, that rested She turned completely away from him, to Gerald Crich, on him and roused him so deeply, that it left his upper self whose eyes were shining with a subtle amusement.

quite calm. It was rather delicious, to feel her drawing his

'Were you ever vewy much afwaid of the savages?' she asked selfrevelations from him, as from the very innermost dark in her calm, dull childish voice.

marrow of his body. She wanted to know. And her dark eyes

'No—never very much afraid. On the whole they're harm-seemed to be looking through into his naked organism. He less—they're not born yet, you can't feel really afraid of them.

felt, she was compelled to him, she was fated to come into You know you can manage them.'

contact with him, must have the seeing him and knowing

'Do you weally? Aren't they very fierce?'

him. And this roused a curious exultance. Also he felt, she

'Not very. There aren't many fierce things, as a matter of must relinquish herself into his hands, and be subject to him.

fact. There aren't many things, neither people nor animals, She was so profane, slave-like, watching him, absorbed by that have it in them to be really dangerous.'

him. It was not that she was interested in what he said; she

'Except in herds,' interrupted Birkin.

was absorbed by his self-revelation, by HIM, she wanted the

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secret of him, the experience of his male being.

waits for what somebody tells him to do. He never does any-Gerald's face was lit up with an uncanny smile, full of thing he wants to do himself—because he doesn't know what light and rousedness, yet unconscious. He sat with his arms he wants. He's a perfect baby.'

on the table, his sunbrowned, rather sinister hands, that were Gerald looked at Halliday for some moments, watching animal and yet very shapely and attractive, pushed forward the soft, rather degenerate face of the young man. Its very towards her. And they fascinated her. And she knew, she softness was an attraction; it was a soft, warm, corrupt nature, watched her own fascination.

into which one might plunge with gratification.

Other men had come to the table, to talk with Birkin and

'But he has no hold over you, has he?' Gerald asked.

Halliday. Gerald said in a low voice, apart, to Pussum:

'You see he MADE me go and live with him, when I didn't

'Where have you come back from?'

want to,' she replied. 'He came and cried to me, tears, you

'From the country,' replied Pussum, in a very low, yet fully never saw so many, saying HE COULDN'T bear it unless I resonant voice. Her face closed hard. Continually she glanced went back to him. And he wouldn't go away, he would have at Halliday, and then a black flare came over her eyes. The stayed for ever. He made me go back. Then every time he heavy, fair young man ignored her completely; he was really behaves in this fashion. And now I'm going to have a baby, he afraid of her. For some moments she would be unaware of wants to give me a hundred pounds and send me into the Gerald. He had not conquered her yet.

country, so that he would never see me nor hear of me again.

'And what has Halliday to do with it?' he asked, his voice But I'm not going to do it, after—'

still muted.

A queer look came over Gerald's face.

She would not answer for some seconds. Then she said,

'Are you going to have a child?' he asked incredulous. It unwillingly:

seemed, to look at her, impossible, she was so young and so far

'He made me go and live with him, and now he wants to in spirit from any child-bearing.

throw me over. And yet he won't let me go to anybody else.

She looked full into his face, and her dark, inchoate eyes He wants me to live hidden in the country. And then he says had now a furtive look, and a look of

a knowledge of evil, dark I persecute him, that he can't get rid of me.' and indomitable. A flame ran secretly to his heart.

'Doesn't know his own mind,' said Gerald.

'Yes,' she said. 'Isn't it beastly?'

'He hasn't any mind, so he can't know it,' she said. 'He

'Don't you want it?' he asked.

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'I don't,' she replied emphatically.

quant.

'But—' he said, 'how long have you known?'

'But Pussum,' said another man, in a very small, quick

'Ten weeks,' she said.

Eton voice, 'you promised not to hurt him.'

All the time she kept her dark, inchoate eyes full upon

'I haven't hurt him,' she answered.

him. He remained silent, thinking. Then, switching off and

'What will you drink?' the young man asked. He was dark, becoming cold, he asked, in a voice full of considerate kind-and smooth-skinned, and full of a stealthy vigour.

ness:

'I don't like porter, Maxim,' she replied.

'Is there anything we can eat here? Is there anything you

'You must ask for champagne,' came the whispering, gentle-would like?' manly voice of the other.

'Yes,' she said, 'I should adore some oysters.'

Gerald suddenly realised that this was a hint to him.

'All right,' he said. 'We'll have oysters.' And he beckoned

'Shall we have champagne?' he asked, laughing.

to the waiter.

'Yes please, dwy,' she lisped childishly.

Halliday took no notice, until the little plate was set be-Gerald watched her eating the oysters. She was delicate fore her. Then suddenly he cried:

and finicking in her eating, her fingers were fine and seemed

'Pussum, you can't eat oysters when you're drinking brandy.'

very sensitive in the tips, so she put her food apart with fine,

'What has it go to do with you?' she asked.

small motions, she ate carefully, delicately. It pleased him very

'Nothing, nothing,' he cried. 'But you can't eat oysters when much to see her, and it irritated Birkin. They were all drink-you're drinking brandy.'

ing champagne. Maxim, the prim young Russian with the

'I'm not drinking brandy,' she replied, and she sprinkled smooth, warm-coloured face and black, oiled hair was the only the last drops of her liqueur over his face. He gave an odd one who seemed to be perfectly calm and sober. Birkin was squeal. She sat looking at him, as if indifferent.

white and abstract, unnatural, Gerald was smiling with a con-

'Pussum, why do you do that?' he cried in panic. He gave stant bright, amused, cold light in his eyes, leaning a little Gerald the impression that he was terrified of her, and that he protectively towards the Pussum, who was very handsome, loved his terror. He seemed to relish his own horror and haand soft, unfolded like some red lotus in dreadful flowering tred of her, turn it over and extract every flavour from it, in nakedness, vainglorious now, flushed with wine and with the real panic. Gerald thought him a strange fool, and yet pi-excitement of men. Halliday looked foolish. One glass of wine Contents



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was enough to make him drunk and giggling. Yet there was me, I'm SURE I should die—I'm sure I should.'

always a pleasant, warm naivete about him, that made him

'I hope not,' whispered the young Russian.

attractive.

'I'm sure I should, Maxim,' she asseverated.

'I'm not afwaid of anything except black-beetles,' said the

'Then one won't crawl on you,' said Gerald, smiling and Pussum, looking up suddenly and staring with her black eyes, knowing. In some strange way he understood her.

on which there seemed an unseeing film of flame, fully upon

'It's metaphysical, as Gerald says,' Birkin stated.

Gerald. He laughed dangerously, from the blood. Her child-There was a little pause of uneasiness.

ish speech caressed his nerves, and her burning, filmed eyes,

'And are you afraid of nothing else, Pussum?' asked the turned now full upon him, oblivious of all her antecedents, young Russian, in his quick, hushed, elegant manner.

gave him a sort of licence.

'Not weally,' she said. 'I am afwaid of some things, but not

'I'm not,' she protested. 'I'm not afraid of other things.

weally the same. I'm not afwaid of BLOOD.'

But black-beetles—ugh!' she shuddered convulsively, as if the

'Not afwaid of blood!' exclaimed a young man with a thick, very thought were too much to bear.

pale, jeering face, who had just come to the table and was

'Do you mean,' said Gerald, with the punctiliousness of a drinking whisky.

man who has been drinking, 'that you are afraid of the sight The Pussum turned on him a sulky look of dislike, low of a black-beetle, or you are afraid of a black-beetle biting and ugly.

you, or doing you some harm?'

'Aren't you really afraid of blud?' the other persisted, a

'Do they bite?' cried the girl.

sneer all over his face.

'How perfectly loathsome!' exclaimed Halliday.

'No, I'm not,' she retorted.

'I don't know,' replied Gerald, looking round the table.

'Why, have you ever seen blood, except in a dentist's spit-

'Do black-beetles bite? But that isn't the point. Are you afraid toon?' jeered the young man.

of their biting, or is it a metaphysical antipathy?'

'I wasn't speaking to you,' she replied rather superbly.

The girl was looking full upon him all the time with in-

'You can answer me, can't you?' he said.

choate eyes.

For reply, she suddenly jabbed a knife across his thick,

'Oh, I think they're beastly, they're horrid,' she cried. 'If I pale hand. He started up with a vulgar curse.

see one, it gives me the creeps all over. If one were to crawl on

'Show's what you are,' said the Pussum in contempt.

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'Curse you,' said the young man, standing by the table

'Julius's the most awful coward you've ever seen,' she cried.

and looking down at her with acrid malevolence.

'He always faints if I lift a knife—he's tewwified of me.'

'Stop that,' said Gerald, in quick, instinctive command.

'H'm!' said Gerald.

The young man stood looking down at her with sardonic

'They're all afwaid of me,' she said. 'Only the Jew thinks contempt, a cowed, selfconscious look on his thick, pale face.

he's going to show his courage. But he's the biggest coward of The blood began to flow from his hand.

them all, really, because he's afwaid what people will think

'Oh, how horrible, take it away!' squealed Halliday, turn-about him—and Julius doesn't care about that.'

ing green and averting his face.

'They've a lot of valour between them,' said Gerald good-

'D'you feel ill?' asked the sardonic young man, in some humouredly.

concern. 'Do you feel ill, Julius? Garn, it's nothing, man, don't The Pussum looked at him with a slow, slow smile. She give her the pleasure of letting her think she's performed a was very handsome, flushed, and confident in dreadful knowl-feat—don't give her the satisfaction, man—it's just what she edge. Two little points of light glinted on Gerald's eyes.

wants.'

'Why do they call you Pussum, because you're like a cat?'

'Oh!' squealed Halliday.

he asked her.

'He's going to cat, Maxim,' said the Pussum warningly.

'I expect so,' she said.

The suave young Russian rose and took Halliday by the arm, The smile grew more intense on his face.

leading him away. Birkin, white and diminished, looked on as

'You are, rather; or a young, female panther.'

if he were displeased. The wounded, sardonic young man

'Oh God, Gerald!' said Birkin, in some disgust.

moved away, ignoring his bleeding hand in the most con-They both looked uneasily at Birkin.

spicuous fashion.

'You're silent tonight, Wupert,' she said to him, with a

'He's an awful coward, really,' said the Pussum to Gerald.

slight insolence, being safe with the other man.

'He's got such an influence over Julius.'

Halliday was coming back, looking forlorn and sick.

'Who is he?' asked Gerald.

'Pussum,' he said, 'I wish you wouldn't do these things—

'He's a Jew, really. I can't bear him.'

Oh!' He sank in his chair with a groan.

'Well, he's quite unimportant. But what's wrong with

'You'd better go home,' she said to him.

Halliday?'

'I WILL go home,' he said. 'But won't you all come along.

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Won't you come round to the flat?' he said to Gerald. 'I should next to her. They heard the young Russian giving orders to be so glad if you would. Do—that'll be splendid. I say?' He the driver, then they were all seated in the dark, crowded close looked round for a waiter. 'Get me a taxi.' Then he groaned together, Halliday groaning and leaning out of the window.

again. 'Oh I do feel—perfectly ghastly! Pussum, you see what They felt the swift, muffled motion of the car.

you do to me.'

The Pussum sat near to Gerald, and she seemed to be-

'Then why are you such an idiot?' she said with sullen come soft, subtly to infuse herself into his bones, as if she calm.

were passing into him in a black, electric flow. Her being

'But I'm not an idiot! Oh, how awful! Do come, every-suffused into his veins like a magnetic darkness, and concen-body, it will be so splendid. Pussum, you are coming. What?

trated at the base of his spine like a fearful source of power.

Oh but you MUST come, yes, you must. What? Oh, my Meanwhile her voice sounded out reedy and nonchalant, as dear girl, don't make a fuss now, I feel perfectly—Oh, it's so she talked indifferently with Birkin and with Maxim. Be-ghastly—Ho!—er! Oh!'

tween her and Gerald was this silence and this black, electric

'You know you can't drink,' she said to him, coldly.

comprehension in the darkness. Then she found his hand,

'I tell you it isn't drink—it's your disgusting behaviour, and grasped it in her own firm, small clasp. It was so utterly Pussum, it's nothing else. Oh, how awful! Libidnikov, do let dark, and yet such a naked statement, that rapid vibrations us go.'

ran through his blood and over his brain, he was no longer

'He's only drunk one glass—only one glass,' came the rapid, responsible. Still her voice rang on like a bell, tinged with a hushed voice of the young Russian.

tone of mockery. And as she swung her head, her fine mane They all moved off to the door. The girl kept near to Gerald, of hair just swept his face, and all his nerves were on fire, as and seemed to be at one in her motion with him. He was with a subtle friction of electricity. But the great centre of his aware of this, and filled with demon-satisfaction that his force held steady, a magnificent pride to him, at the base of motion held good for two. He held her in the hollow of his his spine.

will, and she was soft, secret, invisible in her stirring there.

They arrived at a large block of buildings, went up in a They crowded five of them into the taxi-cab. Halliday lift, and presently a door was being opened for them by a lurched in first, and dropped into his seat against the other Hindu. Gerald looked in surprise, wondering if he were a window. Then the Pussum took her place, and Gerald sat gentleman, one of the Hindus down from Oxford, perhaps.

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But no, he was the manservant.

Tell me again. What? Want money? Want MORE money?

'Make tea, Hasan,' said Halliday.

But what do you want money for?' There was the confused

'There is a room for me?' said Birkin.

sound of the Hindu's talking, then Halliday appeared in the To both of which questions the man grinned, and mur-room, smiling also foolishly, and saying:

mured.

'He says he wants money to buy underclothing. Can any-He made Gerald uncertain, because, being tall and slen-body lend me a shilling? Oh thanks, a shilling will do to buy der and reticent, he looked like a gentleman.

all the underclothes he wants.' He took the money from Gerald

'Who is your servant?' he asked of Halliday. 'He looks a and went out into the passage again, where they heard him swell.'

saying, 'You can't want more money, you had three and six

'Oh yes—that's because he's dressed in another man's yesterday. You mustn't ask for any more. Bring the tea in clothes. He's anything but a swell, really. We found him in quickly.'

the road, starving. So I took him here, and another man gave Gerald looked round the room. It was an ordinary Lon-him clothes. He's anything but what he seems to be—his only don sitting-room in a flat, evidently taken furnished, rather advantage is that he can't speak English and can't understand common and ugly. But there were several negro statues, wood-it, so he's perfectly safe.'

carvings from West Africa, strange and disturbing, the carved

'He's very dirty,' said the young Russian swiftly and si-negroes looked almost like the foetus of a human being. One lently.

was a woman sitting naked in a strange posture, and looking Directly, the man appeared in the doorway.

tortured, her abdomen stuck out. The young Russian explained

'What is it?' said Halliday.

that she was sitting in child-birth, clutching the ends of the The Hindu grinned, and murmured shyly:

band that hung from her neck, one in each hand, so that she

'Want to speak to master.'

could bear down, and help labour. The strange, transfixed, Gerald watched curiously. The fellow in the doorway was rudimentary face of the woman again reminded Gerald of a goodlooking and clean-limbed, his bearing was calm, he looked foetus, it was also rather wonderful, conveying the suggestion elegant, aristocratic. Yet he was half a savage, grinning fool-of the extreme of physical sensation, beyond the limits of ishly. Halliday went out into the corridor to speak with him.

mental consciousness.

'What?' they heard his voice. 'What? What do you say?

'Aren't they rather obscene?' he asked, disapproving.

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'I don't know,' murmured the other rapidly. 'I have never She did not reply, but silently, reservedly reached for the defined the obscene. I think they are very good.'

tea-pot. They all sat round and drank tea. Gerald could feel Gerald turned away. There were one or two new pictures the electric connection between him and her so strongly, as in the room, in the Futurist manner; there was a large piano.

she sat there quiet and withheld, that another set of condi-And these, with some ordinary London lodging-house fur-tions altogether had come to pass. Her silence and her immu-niture of the better sort, completed the whole.

tability perplexed him. HOW was he going to come to her?

The Pussum had taken off her hat and coat, and was seated And yet he felt it quite inevitable. He trusted completely to on the sofa. She was evidently quite at home in the house, but the current that held them. His perplexity was only superfi-uncertain, suspended. She did not quite know her position.

cial, new conditions reigned, the old were surpassed; here one Her alliance for the time being was with Gerald, and she did did as one was possessed to do, no matter what it was.

not know how far this was admitted by any of the men. She Birkin rose. It was nearly one o'clock.

was considering how she should carry off the situation. She

'I'm going to bed,' he said. 'Gerald, I'll ring you up in the was determined to have her experience. Now, at this eleventh morning at your place or you ring me up here.'

hour, she was not to be baulked. Her face was flushed as with

'Right,' said Gerald, and Birkin went out.

battle, her eye was brooding but inevitable.

When he was well gone, Halliday said in a stimulated The man came in with tea and a bottle of Kummel. He voice, to Gerald:

set the tray on a little table before the couch.

'I say, won't you stay here—oh do!'

'Pussum,' said Halliday, 'pour out the tea.'

'You can't put everybody up,' said Gerald.

She did not move.

'Oh but I can, perfectly—there are three more beds be-

'Won't you do it?' Halliday repeated, in a state of nervous sides mine—do stay, won't you. Everything is quite ready—

apprehension.

there is always somebody here—I always put people up—I

'I've not come back here as it was before,' she said. 'I only love having the house crowded.'

came because the others wanted me to, not for your sake.'

'But there are only two rooms,' said the Pussum, in a cold,

'My dear Pussum, you know you are your own mistress. I hostile voice, 'now Rupert's here.'

don't want you to do anything but use the flat for your own

'I know there are only two rooms,' said Halliday, in his convenience—you know it, I've told you so many times.'

odd, high way of speaking. 'But what does that matter?'

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He was smiling rather foolishly, and he spoke eagerly, with Suddenly the Pussum appeared again in the door, her small, an insinuating determination.

childish face looking sullen and vindictive.

'Julius and I will share one room,' said the Russian in his

'I know you want to catch me out,' came her cold, rather discreet, precise voice. Halliday and he were friends since Eton.

resonant voice. 'But I don't care, I don't care how much you

'It's very simple,' said Gerald, rising and pressing back his catch me out.'

arms, stretching himself. Then he went again to look at one of She turned and was gone again. She had been wearing a the pictures. Every one of his limbs was turgid with electric loose dressing-gown of purple silk, tied round her waist. She force, and his back was tense like a tiger's, with slumbering looked so small and childish and vulnerable, almost pitiful.

fire. He was very proud.

And yet the black looks of her eyes made Gerald feel drowned The Pussum rose. She gave a black look at Halliday, black in some potent darkness that almost frightened him.

and deadly, which brought the rather foolishly pleased smile The men lit another cigarette and talked casually.

to that young man's face. Then she went out of the room, with a cold goodnight to them all generally.

There was a brief interval, they heard a door close, then Maxim said, in his refined voice:

'That's all right.'

He looked significantly at Gerald, and said again, with a silent nod:

'That's all right—you're all right.'

Gerald looked at the smooth, ruddy, comely face, and at the strange, significant eyes, and it seemed as if the voice of the young Russian, so small and perfect, sounded in the blood rather than in the air.

'I'M all right then,' said Gerald.

'Yes! Yes! You're all right,' said the Russian.

Halliday continued to smile, and to say nothing.

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'Good-morning,' he said. 'Oh—did you want towels?' And stark naked he went out into the hall, striding a strange, white figure between the unliving furniture. He came back with the towels, and took his former position, crouching seated before the fire on the fender.

'Don't you love to feel the fire on your skin?' he said.

'It IS rather pleasant,' said Gerald.

'How perfectly splendid it must be to be in a climate where one could do without clothing altogether,' said Halliday.

Chapter 7.

'Yes,' said Gerald, 'if there weren't so many things that sting and bite.'

Fetish.

'That's a disadvantage,' murmured Maxim.

Gerald looked at him, and with a slight revulsion saw the In the morning Gerald woke late. He had slept heavily.

human animal, golden skinned and bare, somehow humiliat-Pussum was still asleep, sleeping childishly and pathetically.

ing. Halliday was different. He had a rather heavy, slack, bro-There was something small and curled up and defenceless ken beauty, white and firm. He was like a Christ in a Pieta.

about her, that roused an unsatisfied flame of passion in the The animal was not there at all, only the heavy, broken beauty.

young man's blood, a devouring avid pity. He looked at her And Gerald realised how Halliday's eyes were beautiful too, again. But it would be too cruel to wake her. He subdued so blue and warm and confused, broken also in their expres-himself, and went away.

sion. The fireglow fell on his heavy, rather bowed shoulders, Hearing voices coming from the sitting-room, Halliday he sat slackly crouched on the fender, his face was uplifted, talking to Libidnikov, he went to the door and glanced in. He weak, perhaps slightly disintegrate, and yet with a moving had on a silk wrap of a beautiful bluish colour, with an am-beauty of its own.

ethyst hem.

'Of course,' said Maxim, 'you've been in hot countries To his surprise he saw the two young men by the fire, where the people go about naked.'

stark naked. Halliday looked up, rather pleased.

'Oh really!' exclaimed Halliday. 'Where?'

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'South America—Amazon,' said Gerald.

Birkin suddenly appeared in the doorway, in white pyjamas

'Oh but how perfectly splendid! It's one of the things I and wet hair, and a towel over his arm. He was aloof and want most to do—to live from day to day without EVER

white, and somehow evanescent.

putting on any sort of clothing whatever. If I could do that, I

'There's the bathroom now, if you want it,' he said gener-should feel I had lived.'

ally, and was going away again, when Gerald called:

'But why?' said Gerald. 'I can't see that it makes so much

'I say, Rupert!'

difference.'

'What?' The single white figure appeared again, a pres-

'Oh, I think it would be perfectly splendid. I'm sure life ence in the room.

would be entirely another thing—entirely different, and per-

'What do you think of that figure there? I want to know,'

fectly wonderful.'

Gerald asked.

'But why?' asked Gerald. 'Why should it?'

Birkin, white and strangely ghostly, went over to the carved

'Oh—one would FEEL things instead of merely looking figure of the negro woman in labour. Her nude, protuberant at them. I should feel the air move against me, and feel the body crouched in a strange, clutching posture, her hands grip-things I touched, instead of having only to look at them. I'm ping the ends of the band, above her breast.

sure life is all wrong because it has become much too visual—

'It is art,' said Birkin.

we can neither hear nor feel nor understand, we can only see.

'Very beautiful, it's very beautiful,' said the Russian.

I'm sure that is entirely wrong.'

They all drew near to look. Gerald looked at the group of

'Yes, that is true, that is true,' said the Russian.

men, the Russian golden and like a water-plant, Halliday tall Gerald glanced at him, and saw him, his suave, golden and heavily, brokenly beautiful, Birkin very white and indefi-coloured body with the black hair growing fine and freely, nite, not to be assigned, as he looked closely at the carven like tendrils, and his limbs like smooth plant-stems. He was woman. Strangely elated, Gerald also lifted his eyes to the so healthy and well-made, why did he make one ashamed, face of the wooden figure. And his heart contracted.

why did one feel repelled? Why should Gerald even dislike He saw vividly with his spirit the grey, forward-stretching it, why did it seem to him to detract from his own dignity.

face of the negro woman, African and tense, abstracted in Was that all a human being amounted to? So uninspired!

utter physical stress. It was a terrible face, void, peaked, ab-thought Gerald. stracted almost into meaninglessness by the weight of sensa-

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tion beneath. He saw the Pussum in it. As in a dream, he eyes like black, unhappy pools. He could only see the black, knew her.

bottomless pools of her eyes. Perhaps she suffered. The sensa-

'Why is it art?' Gerald asked, shocked, resentful.

tion of her inchoate suffering roused the old sharp flame in

'It conveys a complete truth,' said Birkin. 'It contains the him, a mordant pity, a passion almost of cruelty.

whole truth of that state, whatever you feel about it.'

'You are awake now,' he said to her.

'But you can't call it HIGH art,' said Gerald.

'What time is it?' came her muted voice.

'High! There are centuries and hundreds of centuries of She seemed to flow

back, almost like liquid, from his ap-development in a straight line, behind that carving; it is an proach, to sink helplessly away from him. Her inchoate look awful pitch of culture, of a definite sort.'

of a violated slave, whose fulfilment lies in her further and

'What culture?' Gerald asked, in opposition. He hated the further violation, made his nerves quiver with acutely desir-sheer African thing.

able sensation. After all, his was the only will, she was the

'Pure culture in sensation, culture in the physical conscious-passive substance of his will. He tingled with the subtle, bit-ness, really ultimate PHYSICAL consciousness, mindless, ing sensation. And then he knew, he must go away from her, utterly sensual. It is so sensual as to be final, supreme.'

there must be pure separation between them.

But Gerald resented it. He wanted to keep certain illu-It was a quiet and ordinary breakfast, the four men all sions, certain ideas like clothing.

looking very clean and bathed. Gerald and the Russian were

'You like the wrong things, Rupert,' he said, 'things against both correct and COMME IL FAUT in appearance and yourself.'

manner, Birkin was gaunt and sick, and looked a failure in his

'Oh, I know, this isn't everything,' Birkin replied, moving attempt to be a properly dressed man, like Gerald and Maxim.

away.

Halliday wore tweeds and a green flannel shirt, and a rag of a When Gerald went back to his room from the bath, he tie, which was just right for him. The Hindu brought in a also carried his clothes. He was so conventional at home, that great deal of soft toast, and looked exactly the same as he had when he was really away, and on the loose, as now, he enjoyed looked the night before, statically the same.

nothing so much as full outrageousness. So he strode with his At the end of the breakfast the Pussum appeared, in a blue silk wrap over his arm and felt defiant.

purple silk wrap with a shimmering sash. She had recovered The Pussum lay in her bed, motionless, her round, dark herself somewhat, but was mute and lifeless still. It was a

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torment to her when anybody spoke to her. Her face was like It roused his obstinacy, and he stood up against it. He hung a small, fine mask, sinister too, masked with unwilling suffer-on for two more days. The result was a nasty and insane scene ing. It was almost midday. Gerald rose and went away to his with Halliday on the fourth evening. Halliday turned with business, glad to get out. But he had not finished. He was absurd animosity upon Gerald, in the cafe. There was a row.

coming back again at evening, they were all dining together, Gerald was on the point of knocking-in Halliday's face; when and he had booked seats for the party, excepting Birkin, at a he was filled with sudden disgust and indifference, and he music-hall.

went away, leaving Halliday in a foolish state of gloating tri-At night they came back to the flat very late again, again umph, the Pussum hard and established, and Maxim stand-flushed with drink. Again the manservant—

who invariably ing clear. Birkin was absent, he had gone out of town again.

disappeared between the hours of ten and twelve at night—

Gerald was piqued because he had left without giving the came in silently and inscrutably with tea, bending in a slow, Pussum money. It was true, she did not care whether he gave strange, leopard-like fashion to put the tray softly on the table.

her money or not, and he knew it. But she would have been His face was immutable, aristocratic-looking, tinged slightly glad of ten pounds, and he would have been VERY glad to with grey under the skin; he was young and goodlooking.

give them to her. Now he felt in a false position. He went But Birkin felt a slight sickness, looking at him, and feeling away chewing his lips to get at the ends of his short clipped the slight greyness as an ash or a corruption, in the aristocratic moustache. He knew the Pussum was merely glad to be rid of inscrutability of expression a nauseating, bestial stupidity.

him. She had got her Halliday whom she wanted. She wanted Again they talked cordially and rousedly together. But al-him completely in her power. Then she would marry him.

ready a certain friability was coming over the party, Birkin She wanted to marry him. She had set her will on marrying was mad with irritation, Halliday was turning in an insane Halliday. She never wanted to hear of Gerald again; unless, hatred against Gerald, the Pussum was becoming hard and perhaps, she were in difficulty; because after all, Gerald was cold, like a flint knife, and Halliday was laying himself out to what she called a man, and these others, Halliday, Libidnikov, her. And her intention, ultimately, was to capture Halliday, Birkin, the whole Bohemian set, they were only half men.

to have complete power over him.

But it was half men she could deal with. She felt sure of In the morning they all stalked and lounged about again.

herself with them. The real men, like Gerald, put her in her But Gerald could feel a strange hostility to himself, in the air.

place too much.

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Still, she respected Gerald, she really respected him. She had managed to get his address, so that she could appeal to him in time of distress. She knew he wanted to give her money.

She would perhaps write to him on that inevitable rainy day.

Chapter 8.

Breadalby.

Breadalby was a Georgian house with Corinthian pillars, standing among the softer, greener hills of Derbyshire, not far from Cromford. In front, it looked over a lawn, over a few trees, down to a string of fish-ponds in the hollow of the silent park. At the back were trees, among which were to be found the stables, and the big kitchen garden, behind which was a wood.

It was a very quiet place, some miles from the highroad, back from the Derwent Valley, outside the show scenery. Silent and forsaken, the golden stucco showed between the trees, the house-front looked down the park,

unchanged and unchanging.

Of late, however, Hermione had lived a good deal at the

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house. She had turned away from London, away from Ox-maid appeared, and then Hermione, coming forward with ford, towards the silence of the country. Her father was mostly her pale face lifted, and her hands outstretched, advancing absent, abroad, she was either alone in the house, with her straight to the newcomers, her voice singing: visitors, of whom there were always several, or she had with 'Here you are—I'm so glad to see you—' she kissed her her brother, a bachelor, and a Liberal member of Parlia-Gudrun—'so glad to see you—' she kissed Ursula and remained ment. He always came down when the House was not sitting, with her arm round her. 'Are you very tired?'

seemed always to be present in Breadalby, although he was

'Not at all tired,' said Ursula.

most conscientious in his attendance to duty.

'Are you tired, Gudrun?'

The summer was just coming in when Ursula and Gudrun

'Not at all, thanks,' said Gudrun.

went to stay the second time with Hermione. Coming along

'No—' drawled Hermione. And she stood and looked at in the car, after they had entered the park, they looked across them. The two girls were embarrassed because she would not the dip, where the fish-ponds lay in silence, at the pillared move into the house, but must have her little scene of wel-front of the house, sunny and small like an English drawing come there on the path. The servants waited.

of the old school, on the brow of the green hill, against the

'Come in,' said Hermione at last, having fully taken in the trees. There were small figures on the green lawn, women in pair of them. Gudrun was the more beautiful and attractive, lavender and yellow moving to the shade of the enormous, she had decided again, Ursula was more physical, more wombeautifully balanced cedar tree.

anly. She admired Gudrun's dress more. It was of green pop-

'Isn't it complete!' said Gudrun. 'It is as final as an old lin, with a loose coat above it, of broad, dark-green and dark-aquatint.' She spoke with some resentment in her voice, as if brown stripes. The hat was of a pale, greenish straw, the colour she were captivated unwillingly, as if she must admire against of new hay, and it had a plaited ribbon of black and orange, her will.

the stockings were dark green, the shoes black. It was a good

'Do you love it?' asked Ursula.

get-up, at once fashionable and individual. Ursula, in dark

'I don't LOVE it, but in its way, I think it is quite com-blue, was more ordinary, though she also looked well.

plete.'

Hermione herself wore a dress of prune-coloured silk, with The motor-car ran

down the hill and up again in one coral beads and coral coloured stockings. But her dress was breath, and they were curving to the side door. A parlour-both shabby and soiled, even rather dirty.

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'You would like to see your rooms now, wouldn't you! Yes.

signed to give a tone of flippancy to a stream of conversation We will go up now, shall we?'

that was all critical and general, a canal of conversation rather Ursula was glad when she could be left alone in her room.

than a stream.

Hermione lingered so long, made such a stress on one. She The attitude was mental and very wearying. Only the eld-stood so near to one, pressing herself near upon one, in a way erly sociologist, whose mental fibre was so tough as to be in-that was most embarrassing and oppressive. She seemed to sentient, seemed to be thoroughly happy. Birkin was down in hinder one's workings.

the mouth. Hermione appeared, with amazing persistence, to Lunch was served on the lawn, under the great tree, whose wish to ridicule him and make him look ignominious in the thick, blackish boughs came down close to the grass. There eyes of everybody. And it was surprising how she seemed to

were present a young Italian woman, slight and fashionable, a succeed, how helpless he seemed against her. He looked com-young, athletic-looking Miss Bradley, a learned, dry Baronet pletely insignificant. Ursula and Gudrun, both very unused, of fifty, who was always making witticisms and laughing at were mostly silent, listening to the slow, rhapsodic sing-song them heartily in a harsh, horse-laugh, there was Rupert Birkin, of Hermione, or the verbal sallies of Sir Joshua, or the prattle and then a woman secretary, a Fraulein Marz, young and slim of Fraulein, or the responses of the other two women.

and pretty.

Luncheon was over, coffee was brought out on the grass, The food was very good, that was one thing. Gudrun, criti-the party left the table and sat about in lounge chairs, in the cal of everything, gave it her full approval. Ursula loved the shade or in the sunshine as they wished. Fraulein departed situation, the white table by the cedar tree, the scent of new into the house, Hermione took up her embroidery, the little sunshine, the little vision of the leafy park, with far-off deer Contessa took a book, Miss Bradley was weaving a basket out feeding peacefully. There seemed a magic circle drawn about of fine grass, and there they all were on the lawn in the early the place, shutting out the present, enclosing the delightful, summer afternoon, working leisurely and spattering with half-precious past, trees and deer and silence, like a dream.

intellectual, deliberate talk.

But in spirit she was unhappy. The talk went on like a Suddenly there was the sound of the brakes and the shut-rattle of small artillery, always slightly sententious, with a senting off of a motor-car.

tentiousness that was only emphasised by the continual crack-

'There's Salsie!' sang Hermione, in her slow, amusing singling of a witticism, the continual spatter of verbal jest, de-song. And laying down her work, she rose slowly, and slowly

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passed over the lawn, round the bushes, out of sight.

'Of course,' said Hermione, lifting her face like a rhapso-

'Who is it?' asked Gudrun.

dist, 'there CAN be no reason, no EXCUSE for education,

'Mr Roddice—Miss Roddice's brother—at least, I sup-except the joy and beauty of knowledge in itself.' She seemed pose it's he,' said Sir Joshua.

to rumble and ruminate with subterranean thoughts for a

'Salsie, yes, it is her brother,' said the little Contessa, lift-minute, then she proceeded: 'Vocational education ISN'T

ing her head for a moment from her book, and speaking as if education, it is the close of education.'

to give information, in her slightly deepened, guttural En-Gerald, on the brink of discussion, sniffed the air with glish.

delight and prepared for action.

They all waited. And then round the bushes came the tall

'Not necessarily,' he said. 'But isn't education really like form of Alexander

Roddice, striding romantically like a gymnastics, isn't the end of education the production of a Meredith hero who remembers Disraeli. He was cordial with well-trained, vigorous, energetic mind?'

everybody, he was at once a host, with an easy, offhand hospi-

'Just as athletics produce a healthy body, ready for any-tality that he had learned for Hermione's friends. He had just thing,' cried Miss Bradley, in hearty accord.

come down from London, from the House. At once the at-Gudrun looked at her in silent loathing.

mosphere of the House of Commons made itself felt over the

'Well—' rumbled Hermione, 'I don't know. To me the plea-lawn: the Home Secretary had said such and such a thing, sure of knowing is so great, so WONDERFUL—nothing and he, Roddice, on the other hand, thought such and such a has meant so much to me in all life, as certain knowledge—thing, and had said so-and-so to the PM.

no, I am sure—nothing.'

Now Hermione came round the bushes with Gerald Crich.

'What knowledge, for example, Hermione?' asked He had come along with Alexander. Gerald was presented to Alexander.

everybody, was kept by Hermione for a few moments in full Hermione lifted her face and rumbled—

view, then he was led away, still by Hermione. He was evi-

'M—m—m—I don't know . . . But one thing was the dently her guest of the moment.

stars, when I really understood something about the stars.

There had been a split in the Cabinet; the minister for One feels so

UPLIFTED, so UNBOUNDED . . . '

Education had resigned owing to adverse criticism. This started Birkin looked at her in a white fury.

a conversation on education.

'What do you want to feel unbounded for?' he said sar-

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castically. 'You don't want to BE unbounded.'

of gravitation for instance, knowledge of the past?'

Hermione recoiled in offence.

'Yes,' said Birkin.

'Yes, but one does have that limitless feeling,' said Gerald.

'There is a most beautiful thing in my book,' suddenly

'It's like getting on top of the mountain and seeing the Pa-piped the little Italian woman. 'It says the man came to the cific.'

door and threw his eyes down the street.'

'Silent upon a peak in Dariayn,' murmured the Italian, There was a general laugh in the company. Miss Bradley lifting her face for a moment from her book.

went and looked over the shoulder of the Contessa.

'Not necessarily in Dariayn,' said Gerald, while Ursula

'See!' said the Contessa.

began to laugh.

'Bazarov came to the door and threw his eyes hurriedly Hermione waited for the dust to settle, and then she said, down the street,' she read.

untouched:

Again there was a loud laugh, the most startling of which

'Yes, it is the greatest thing in life—to KNOW. It is really was the Baronet's, which rattled out like a clatter of falling to be happy, to be FREE.'

stones.

'Knowledge is, of course, liberty,' said Mattheson.

'What is the book?' asked Alexander, promptly.

'In compressed tabloids,' said Birkin, looking at the dry,

'Fathers and Sons, by Turgenev,' said the little foreigner, stiff little body of the Baronet. Immediately Gudrun saw the pronouncing every syllable distinctly. She looked at the cover, famous sociologist as a flat bottle, containing tabloids of com-to verify herself.

pressed liberty. That pleased her. Sir Joshua was labelled and

'An old American edition,' said Birkin.

placed forever in her mind.

'Ha!—of course—translated from the French,' said

'What does that mean, Rupert?' sang Hermione, in a calm Alexander, with a fine declamatory voice. 'Bazarov ouvra la snub.

porte et jeta les yeux dans la rue.'

'You can only have knowledge, strictly,' he replied, 'of things He looked brightly round the company.

concluded, in the past. It's like bottling the liberty of last

'I wonder what the "hurriedly" was,' said Ursula.

summer in the bottled gooseberries.'

They all began to guess.

'CAN one have knowledge only of the past?' asked the And then, to the amazement of everybody, the maid came Baronet, pointedly. 'Could we call our knowledge of the laws hurrying with a large tea-tray. The afternoon had passed so

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swiftly.

sang her leisurely voice at intervals. And they had all to come After tea, they were all gathered for a walk.

this way. The daffodils were pretty, but who could see them?

'Would you like to come for a walk?' said Hermione to Ursula was stiff all over with resentment by this time, resent-each of them, one by one. And they all said yes, feeling some-ment of the whole atmosphere. Gudrun, mocking and objec-how like prisoners marshalled for exercise. Birkin only retive, watched and registered everything.

fused.

They looked at the shy deer, and Hermione talked to the

'Will you come for a walk, Rupert?'

stag, as if he too were a boy she wanted to wheedle and fondle.

'No, Hermione.'

He was male, so she must exert some kind of power over him.

'But are you SURE?'

They trailed home by the fish-ponds, and Hermione told

'Quite sure.' There was a second's hesitation.

them about the quarrel of two male swans, who had striven

'And why not?' sang Hermione's question. It made her for the love of the one lady. She chuckled and laughed as she blood run sharp, to be thwarted in even so trifling a matter.

told how the ousted lover had sat with his head buried under She intended them all to walk with her in the park.

his wing, on the gravel.

'Because I don't like trooping off in a gang,' he said.

When they arrived back at the house, Hermione stood on Her voice rumbled in her throat for a moment. Then she the lawn and sang out, in a strange, small, high voice that said, with a curious stray calm:

carried very far:

'Then we'll leave a little boy behind, if he's sulky.'

'Rupert! Rupert!' The first syllable was high and slow, the And she looked really gay, while she insulted him. But it second dropped down. 'Roo-o-opert.'

merely made him stiff.

But there was no answer. A maid appeared.

She trailed off to the rest of the company, only turning to

'Where is Mr Birkin, Alice?' asked the mild straying voice wave her handkerchief to him, and to chuckle with laughter, of Hermione. But under the straying voice, what a persistent, singing out:

almost insane WILL!

'Good-bye, good-bye, little boy.'

'I think he's in his room, madam.'

'Good-bye, impudent hag,' he said to himself.

'Is he?'

They all went through the park. Hermione wanted to show Hermione went slowly up the stairs, along the corridor, them the wild daffodils on a little slope. 'This way, this way,'

singing out in her high, small call:

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'Ru-oo-pert! Ru-oo pert!'

of it. The Chinese Ambassador gave it me.'

She came to his door, and tapped, still crying: 'Roo-pert.'

'I know,' he said.

'Yes,' sounded his voice at last.

'But why do you copy it?' she asked, casual and sing-song.

'What are you doing?'

'Why not do something original?'

The question was mild and curious.

'I want to know it,' he replied. 'One gets more of China, There was no answer. Then he opened the door.

copying this picture, than reading all the books.'

'We've come back,' said Hermione. 'The daffodils are SO

'And what do you get?'

beautiful.'

She was at once roused, she laid as it were violent hands on

'Yes,' he said, 'I've seen them.'

him, to extract his secrets from him. She MUST know. It was She looked at him with her long, slow, impassive look, along a dreadful tyranny, an obsession in her, to know all he knew.

her cheeks.

For some time he was silent, hating to answer her. Then, com-

'Have you?' she echoed. And she remained looking at him.

pelled, he began:

She was stimulated above all things by this conflict with him,

'I know what centres they live from—what they perceive when he was like a sulky boy, helpless, and she had him safe at and feel—the hot, stinging centrality of a goose in the flux of Breadalby. But underneath she knew the split was coming, cold water and mud—the curious bitter stinging heat of a and her hatred of him was subconscious and intense.

goose's blood, entering their own blood like an inoculation of

'What were you doing?' she reiterated, in her mild, indif-corruptive fire—fire of the cold-burning mud—the lotus ferent tone. He did not answer, and she made her way, almost mystery.'

unconsciously into his room. He had taken a Chinese draw-Hermione looked at him along her narrow, pallid cheeks.

ing of geese from the boudoir, and was copying it, with much Her eyes were strange and drugged, heavy under their heavy, skill and vividness.

drooping lids. Her thin bosom shrugged convulsively. He stared

'You are copying the drawing,' she said, standing near the back at her, devilish and unchanging. With another strange, table, and looking down at his work. 'Yes. How beautifully sick convulsion, she turned away, as if she were sick, could feel you do it! You like it very much, don't you?'

dissolution setting-in in her body. For with her mind she was

'It's a marvellous drawing,' he said.

unable to attend to his words, he caught her, as it were, be-

'Is it? I'm so glad you like it, because I've always been fond neath all her defences, and destroyed her with some insidious

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occult potency.

and jet, Fraulein Marz wore pale blue. It gave Hermione a

'Yes,' she said, as if she did not know what she were saying.

sudden convulsive sensation of pleasure, to see these rich

'Yes,' and she swallowed, and tried to regain her mind. But colours under the candlelight. She was aware of the talk go-she could not, she was witless, decentralised. Use all her will ing on, ceaselessly, Joshua's voice dominating; of the ceaseless as she might, she could not recover. She suffered the ghastli-pitter-patter of women's light laughter and responses; of the ness of dissolution, broken and gone in a horrible corruption.

brilliant colours and the white table and the shadow above And he stood and looked at her unmoved. She strayed out, and below; and she seemed in a swoon of gratification, con-pallid and preyed-upon like a ghost, like one attacked by the vulsed with pleasure and yet sick, like a REVENANT. She tomb-influences which dog us. And she was gone like a corpse, took very little part in the conversation, yet she heard it all, it that has no presence, no connection. He remained hard and was all hers.

vindictive.

They all went together into the drawing-room, as if they Hermione came down to dinner strange and sepulchral, were one family, easily, without any attention to ceremony.

her eyes heavy and full of sepulchral darkness, strength. She Fraulein handed the coffee, everybody smoked cigarettes, or had put on a dress of stiff old greenish brocade, that fitted else long warden pipes of white clay, of which a sheaf was tight and made her look tall and rather terrible, ghastly. In provided.

the gay light of the drawing-room she was uncanny and op-

'Will you smoke?—cigarettes or pipe?' asked Fraulein pret-pressive. But seated in the half-light of the diningroom, sittily. There was a circle of people, Sir Joshua with his eighting stiffly before the shaded candles on the table, she seemed teenth-century appearance, Gerald the amused, handsome a power, a presence. She listened and attended with a drugged young Englishman, Alexander tall and the handsome politi-attention.

cian, democratic and lucid, Hermione strange like a long The party was gay and extravagant in appearance, every-Cassandra, and the women lurid with colour, all dutifully body had put on evening dress except Birkin and Joshua smoking their long white pipes, and sitting in a half-moon in Mattheson. The little Italian Contessa wore a dress of tissue, the comfortable, soft-lighted drawing-room, round the logs of orange and gold and black velvet in soft wide stripes, Gudrun that flickered on the marble hearth.

was emerald green with strange net-work, Ursula was in yel-The talk was very often political or sociological, and inter-low with dull silver veiling, Miss Bradley was of grey, crimson esting, curiously anarchistic. There was an accumulation of **Contents**



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powerful force in the room, powerful and destructive. Every-

'They are so languid,' said Ursula.

thing seemed to be thrown into the melting pot, and it seemed

'The three witches from Macbeth,' suggested Fraulein to Ursula they were all witches, helping the pot to bubble.

usefully. It was finally decided to do Naomi and Ruth and There was an elation and a satisfaction in it all, but it was Orpah. Ursula was Naomi, Gudrun was Ruth, the Contessa cruelly exhausting for the newcomers, this ruthless mental was Orpah. The idea was to make a little ballet, in the style of

pressure, this powerful, consuming, destructive mentality that the Russian Ballet of Pavlova and Nijinsky.

emanated from Joshua and Hermione and Birkin and domi-The Contessa was ready first, Alexander went to the pinated the rest.

ano, a space was cleared. Orpah, in beautiful oriental clothes, But a sickness, a fearful nausea gathered possession of began slowly to dance the death of her husband. Then Ruth Hermione. There was a lull in the talk, as it was arrested by came, and they wept together, and lamented, then Naomi came her unconscious but all-powerful will.

to comfort them. It was all done in dumb show, the women

'Salsie, won't you play something?' said Hermione, break-danced their emotion in gesture and motion. The little drama ing off completely. 'Won't somebody dance? Gudrun, you went on for a quarter of an hour.

will dance, won't you? I wish you would. Anche tu, Palestra, Ursula was beautiful as Naomi. All her men were dead, it ballerai?—si, per piacere. You too, Ursula.'

remained to her only to stand alone in indomitable assertion, Hermione rose and slowly pulled the gold-embroidered demanding nothing. Ruth, womanloving, loved her. Orpah, band that hung by the mantel, clinging to it for a moment, a vivid, sensational, subtle widow, would go back to the former then releasing it suddenly. Like a priestess she looked, uncon-life, a repetition. The interplay between the women was real scious, sunk in a heavy halftrance.

and rather frightening. It was strange to see how Gudrun A servant came, and soon reappeared with armfuls of silk clung with heavy, desperate passion to Ursula, yet smiled with robes and shawls and scarves, mostly oriental, things that subtle malevolence against her, how Ursula accepted silently, Hermione, with her love for beautiful extravagant dress, had unable to provide any more either for herself or for the other, collected gradually.

but dangerous and indomitable, refuting her grief.

'The three women will dance together,' she said.

Hermione loved to watch. She could see the Contessa's

'What shall it be?' asked Alexander, rising briskly.

rapid, stoat-like sensationalism, Gudrun's ultimate but treach-

'Vergini Delle Rocchette,' said the Contessa at once.

erous cleaving to the woman in her sister, Ursula's dangerous

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helplessness, as if she were helplessly weighted, and unreleased.

'Now I see,' cried the Contessa excitedly, watching his

'That was very beautiful,' everybody cried with one ac-purely gay motion, which he had all to himself. 'Mr Birkin, cord. But Hermione writhed in her soul, knowing what she he is a changer.'

could not know. She cried out for more dancing, and it was Hermione looked at her slowly, and shuddered, knowing her will that set the Contessa and Birkin moving mockingly that only a foreigner could have seen and have said this.

in Malbrouk.

'Cosa vuol'dire, Palestra?' she asked, sing-song.

Gerald was excited by the desperate cleaving of Gudrun

'Look,' said the Contessa, in Italian. 'He is not a man, he is to Naomi. The essence of that female, subterranean reckless-a chameleon, a creature of change.'

ness and mockery penetrated his blood. He could not forget

'He is not a man, he is treacherous, not one of us,' said Gudrun's lifted, offered, cleaving, reckless, yet withal mock-itself over in Hermione's consciousness. And her soul writhed ing weight. And Birkin, watching like a hermit crab from its in the black subjugation to him, because of his power to es-hole, had seen the brilliant frustration and helplessness of cape, to exist, other than she did, because he was not consis-Ursula. She was rich, full of dangerous power. She was like a tent, not a man, less than a man. She hated him in a despair strange unconscious bud of powerful womanhood. He was that shattered her and broke her down, so that she suffered unconsciously drawn to her. She was his future.

sheer dissolution like a corpse, and was unconscious of every-Alexander played some Hungarian music, and they all thing save the horrible sickness of dissolution that was taking danced, seized by the spirit. Gerald was marvellously exhila-place within her, body and soul.

rated at finding himself in motion, moving towards Gudrun, The house being full, Gerald was given the smaller room, dancing with feet that could not yet escape from the waltz really the dressing-room, communicating with Birkin's bed-and the two-step, but feeling his force stir along his limbs room. When they all took their candles and mounted the and his body, out of captivity. He did not know yet how to stairs, where the lamps were burning subduedly, Hermione dance their convulsive, rag-time sort of dancing, but he knew captured Ursula and brought her into her own bedroom, to how to begin. Birkin, when he could get free from the weight talk to her. A sort of constraint came over Ursula in the big, of the people present, whom he

disliked, danced rapidly and strange bedroom. Hermione seemed to be bearing down on with a real gaiety. And how Hermione hated him for this her, awful and inchoate, making some appeal. They were look-irresponsible gaiety.

ing at some Indian silk shirts, gorgeous and sensual in them-

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selves, their shape, their almost corrupt gorgeousness. And the one with the darker hair—she's an artist—does sculpture Hermione came near, and her bosom writhed, and Ursula was and modelling.'

for a moment blank with panic. And for a moment Hermione's

'She's not a teacher in the Grammar School, then—only haggard eyes saw the fear on the face of the other, there was the other?'

again a sort of crash, a crashing down. And Ursula picked up

'Both—Gudrun art mistress, Ursula a class mistress.'

a shirt of rich red and blue silk, made for a young princess of

'And what's the father?'

fourteen, and was crying mechanically:

'Handicraft instructor in the schools.'

'Isn't it wonderful—who would dare to put those two

'Really!'

strong colours together—'

'Class-barriers are breaking down!'

Then Hermione's maid entered silently and Ursula, over-Gerald was always uneasy under the slightly jeering tone come with dread, escaped, carried away by powerful impulse.

of the other.

Birkin went straight to bed. He was feeling happy, and

'That their father is handicraft instructor in a school! What sleepy. Since he had danced he was happy. But Gerald would does it matter to me?'

talk to him. Gerald, in evening dress, sat on Birkin's bed when Birkin laughed. Gerald looked at his face, as it lay there the other lay down, and must talk.

laughing and bitter and indifferent on the pillow, and he could

'Who are those two Brangwens?' Gerald asked.

not go away.

'They live in Beldover.'

'I don't suppose you will see very much more of Gudrun,

'In Beldover! Who are they then?'

at least. She is a restless bird, she'll be gone in a week or two,'

'Teachers in the Grammar School.'

said Birkin.

There was a pause.

'Where will she go?'

'They are!' exclaimed Gerald at length. 'I thought I had

'London, Paris, Rome—heaven knows. I always expect her seen them before.'

to sheer off to Damascus or San Francisco; she's a bird of

'It disappoints you?' said Birkin.

paradise. God knows what she's got to do with Beldover. It

'Disappoints me! No—but how is it Hermione has them goes by contraries, like dreams.'

here?'

Gerald pondered for a few moments.

'She knew Gudrun in London—that's the younger one,

'How do you know her so well?' he asked.

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'I knew her in London,' he replied, 'in the Algernon Strange her type. By the way, how did things go off with Pussum set. She'll know about Pussum and Libidnikov and the rest—

after I left you? I haven't heard anything.'

even if she doesn't know them personally. She was never quite

'Oh, rather disgusting. Halliday turned objectionable, and that set—more conventional, in a way. I've known her for two I only just saved myself from jumping in his stomach, in a years, I suppose.'

real old-fashioned row.'

'And she makes money, apart from her teaching?' asked Birkin was silent.

Gerald.

'Of course,' he said, 'Julius is somewhat insane. On the

'Some—irregularly. She can sell her models. She has a cer-one hand he's had religious mania, and on the other, he is tain reclame.'

fascinated by obscenity. Either he is a pure servant, washing

'How much for?'

the feet of Christ, or else he is making obscene drawings of

'A guinea, ten guineas.'

Jesus—action and reaction—and between the two, nothing.

'And are they good? What are they?'

He is really insane. He wants a pure lily, another girl, with a

'I think sometimes they are marvellously good. That is baby face, on the one hand, and on the other, he MUST have hers, those two wagtails in Hermione's boudoir—you've seen the Pussum, just to defile himself with her.'

them—they are carved in wood and painted.'

'That's what I can't make out,' said Gerald. 'Does he love

'I thought it was savage carving again.'

her, the Pussum, or doesn't he?'

'No, hers. That's what they are—animals and birds, some-

'He neither does nor doesn't. She is the harlot, the actual times odd small people in everyday dress, really rather won-harlot of adultery to him. And he's got a craving to throw derful when they come off. They have a sort of funniness that himself into the filth of her. Then he gets up and calls on the is quite unconscious and subtle.'

name of the lily of purity, the baby-faced girl, and so enjoys

'She might be a well-known artist one day?' mused Gerald.

himself all round. It's the old story—action and reaction, and

'She might. But I think she won't. She drops her art if nothing between.'

anything else catches her. Her contrariness prevents her tak-

'I don't know,' said Gerald, after a pause, 'that he does ing it seriously—she must never be too serious, she feels she insult the Pussum so very much. She strikes me as being rather might give herself away. And she won't give herself away—foul.'

she's always on the defensive. That's what I can't stand about

'But I thought you liked her,' exclaimed Birkin. 'I always

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felt fond of her. I never had anything to do with her, person-

'I think I'd rather close the account,' said Gerald, repeat-ally, that's true.'

ing himself vaguely.

'I liked her all right, for a couple of days,' said Gerald.

'It doesn't matter one way or another,' said Birkin.

'But a week of her would have turned me over. There's a cer-

'You always say it doesn't matter,' said Gerald, a little tain smell about the skin of those women, that in the end is puzzled, looking down at the face of the other man affection-sickening beyond words—even if you like it at first.'

ately.

'I know,' said Birkin. Then he added, rather fretfully, 'But

'Neither does it,' said Birkin.

go to bed, Gerald. God knows what time it is.'

'But she was a decent sort, really—'

Gerald looked at his watch, and at length rose off the bed,

'Render unto Caesarina the things that are Caesarina's,'

and went to his room. But he returned in a few minutes, in said Birkin, turning aside. It seemed to him Gerald was talk-his shirt.

ing for the sake of talking. 'Go away, it wearies me—it's too

'One thing,' he said, seating himself on the bed again. 'We late at night,' he said.

finished up rather stormily, and I never had time to give her

'I wish you'd tell me something that DID matter,' said anything.'

Gerald, looking down all the time at the face of the other

'Money?' said Birkin. 'She'll get what she wants from man, waiting for something. But Birkin turned his face aside.

Halliday or from one of her acquaintances.'

'All right then, go to sleep,' said Gerald, and he laid his

'But then,' said Gerald, 'I'd rather give her her dues and hand affectionately on the other man's shoulder, and went settle the account.'

away.

'She doesn't care.'

In the morning when Gerald awoke and heard Birkin

'No, perhaps not. But one feels the account is left open, move, he called out: 'I still think I ought to give the Pussum and one would rather it were closed.'

ten pounds.'

'Would you?' said Birkin. He was looking at the white

'Oh God!' said Birkin, 'don't be so matter-of-fact. Close legs of Gerald, as the latter sat on the side of the bed in his the account in your own soul, if you like. It is there you can't shirt. They were white-skinned, full, muscular legs, hand-close it.'

some and decided. Yet they moved Birkin with a sort of pa-

'How do you know I can't?'

thos, tenderness, as if they were childish.

'Knowing you.'

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Gerald meditated for some moments.

'You be interested in what you can, Gerald. Only I'm not

'It seems to me the right thing to do, you know, with the interested myself,' said Birkin.

Pussums, is to pay them.'

'What am I to do at all, then?' came Gerald's voice.

'And the right thing for mistresses: keep them. And the

'What you like. What am I to do myself?'

right thing for wives: live under the same roof with them.

In the silence Birkin could feel Gerald musing this fact.

Integer vitae scelerisque purus—' said Birkin.

'I'm blest if I know,' came the good-humoured answer.

'There's no need to be nasty about it,' said Gerald.

'You see,' said Birkin, 'part of you wants the Pussum, and

'It bores me. I'm not interested in your peccadilloes.'

nothing but the Pussum, part of you wants the mines, the

'And I don't care whether you are or not—I am.'

business, and nothing but the business—and there you are—

The morning was again sunny. The maid had been in and all in bits—'

brought the water, and had drawn the curtains. Birkin, sitting

'And part of me wants something else,' said Gerald, in a up in bed, looked lazily and pleasantly out on the park, that queer, quiet, real voice.

was so green and deserted, romantic, belonging to the past.

'What?' said Birkin, rather surprised.

He was thinking how lovely, how sure, how formed, how final

'That's what I hoped you could tell me,' said Gerald.

all the things of the past were—the lovely accomplished past—

There was a silence for some time.

this house, so still and golden, the park slumbering its centu-

'I can't tell you—I can't find my own way, let alone yours.

ries of peace. And then, what a snare and a delusion, this You might marry,' Birkin replied.

beauty of static things—what a horrible, dead prison Breadalby

'Who—the Pussum?' asked Gerald.

really was, what an intolerable confinement, the peace! Yet it

'Perhaps,' said Birkin. And he rose and went to the win-was better than the sordid scrambling conflict of the present.

dow.

If only one might create the future after one's own heart—for

'That is your panacea,' said Gerald. 'But you haven't even a little pure truth, a little unflinching application of simple tried it on yourself yet, and you are sick enough.'

truth to life, the heart cried out ceaselessly.

'I am,' said Birkin. 'Still, I shall come right.'

'I can't see what you will leave me at all, to be interested

'Through marriage?'

in,' came Gerald's voice from the lower room. 'Neither the

'Yes,' Birkin answered obstinately.

Pussums, nor the mines, nor anything else.'

'And no,' added Gerald. 'No, no, no, my boy.'

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There was a silence between them, and a strange tension Even Alexander was rather authoritative where Hermione of hostility. They always kept a gap, a distance between them, was cool. He took his tone from her, inevitably. Birkin sat they wanted always to be free each of the other. Yet there was down and looked at the table. He was so used to this house, to a curious heart-straining towards each other.

this room, to this atmosphere, through years of intimacy, and

'Salvator femininus,' said Gerald, satirically.

now he felt in complete opposition to it all, it had nothing to

'Why not?' said Birkin.

do with him. How well he knew Hermione, as she sat there,

'No reason at all,' said Gerald, 'if it really works. But whom erect and silent and somewhat bemused, and yet so potent, so will you marry?'

powerful! He knew her statically, so finally, that it was almost

'A woman,' said Birkin.

like a madness. It was difficult to believe one was not mad,

'Good,' said Gerald.

that one was not a figure in the hall of kings in some Egyp-Birkin and Gerald were the last to come down to break-tian tomb, where the dead all sat immemorial and tremen-fast. Hermione liked everybody to be early. She suffered when dous. How utterly he knew Joshua Mattheson, who was talk-she felt her day was diminished, she felt she had missed her ing in his harsh, yet rather mincing voice, endlessly, endlessly, life. She seemed to grip the hours by the throat, to force her always with a strong mentality working, always interesting, life from them. She was rather pale and ghastly, as if left be-and yet always known, everything he said known beforehand, hind, in the morning. Yet she had her power, her will was however novel it was, and clever. Alexander the up-to-date strangely pervasive. With the entrance of the two young men host, so bloodlessly free-and-easy, Fraulein so prettily chim-a sudden tension was felt.

ing in just as she should, the little Italian Countess taking She lifted her face, and said, in her amused sing-song: notice of everybody, only playing her little game, objective

'Good morning! Did you sleep well? I'm so glad.'

and cold, like a weasel watching everything, and extracting And she turned away, ignoring them. Birkin, who knew her own amusement, never giving herself in the slightest; then her well, saw that she intended to discount his existence.

Miss Bradley, heavy and rather subservient, treated with cool,

'Will you take what you want from the sideboard?' said almost amused contempt by Hermione, and therefore slighted Alexander, in a voice slightly suggesting disapprobation. 'I by everybody—how known it all was, like a game with the hope the things aren't cold. Oh no! Do you mind putting out

figures set out, the same figures, the Queen of chess, the the flame under the chafingdish, Rupert? Thank you.'

knights, the pawns, the same now as they were hundreds of

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years ago, the same figures moving round in one of the innu-the lessons. They expect me.'

merable permutations that make up the game. But the game

'Are you a Christian?' asked the Italian Countess, with is known, its going on is like a madness, it is so exhausted.

sudden interest.

There was Gerald, an amused look on his face; the game

'No,' said Alexander. 'I'm not. But I believe in keeping up pleased him. There was Gudrun, watching with steady, large, the old institutions.'

hostile eyes; the game fascinated her, and she loathed it. There

'They are so beautiful,' said Fraulein daintily.

was Ursula, with a slightly startled look on her face, as if she

'Oh, they are,' cried Miss Bradley.

were hurt, and the pain were just outside her consciousness.

They all trailed out on to the lawn. It was a sunny, soft Suddenly Birkin got up and went out.

morning in early summer, when life ran in the world subtly,

'That's enough,' he said to himself involuntarily.

like a reminiscence. The church bells were ringing a little way Hermione knew his motion, though not in her conscious-off, not a cloud was in the sky, the swans were like lilies on the ness. She lifted her heavy eyes and saw him lapse suddenly water below, the peacocks walked with long, prancing steps away, on a sudden, unknown tide, and the waves broke over across the shadow and into the sunshine of the grass. One her. Only her indomitable will remained static and mechani-wanted to swoon into the by-gone perfection of it all.

cal, she sat at the table making her musing, stray remarks. But

'Good-bye,' called Alexander, waving his gloves cheerily, the darkness had covered her, she was like a ship that has gone and he disappeared behind the bushes, on his way to church.

down. It was finished for her too, she was wrecked in the

'Now,' said Hermione, 'shall we all bathe?'

darkness. Yet the unfailing mechanism of her will worked on,

'I won't,' said Ursula.

she had that activity.

'You don't want to?' said Hermione, looking at her slowly.

'Shall we bathe this morning?' she said, suddenly looking

'No. I don't want to,' said Ursula.

at them all.

'Nor I,' said Gudrun.

'Splendid,' said Joshua. 'It is a perfect morning.'

'What about my suit?' asked Gerald.

'Oh, it is beautiful,' said Fraulein.

'I don't know,' laughed Hermione, with an odd, amused

'Yes, let us bathe,' said the Italian woman.

intonation. 'Will a handkerchief do—a large handkerchief?'

'We have no bathing suits,' said Gerald.

'That will do,' said Gerald.

'Have mine,' said Alexander. 'I must go to church and read

'Come along then,' sang Hermione.

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The first to run across the lawn was the little Italian, small wall. There was a dive, and the little Countess was swimming and like a cat, her white legs twinkling as she went, ducking like a rat, to join him. They both sat in the sun, laughing and slightly her head, that was tied in a gold silk kerchief. She crossing their arms on their breasts. Sir Joshua swam up to tripped through the gate and down the grass, and stood, like them, and stood near them, up to his arm-pits in the water.

a tiny figure of ivory and bronze, at the water's edge, having Then Hermione and Miss Bradley swam over, and they sat in dropped off her towelling, watching the swans, which came a row on the embankment.

up in surprise. Then out ran Miss Bradley, like a large, soft

'Aren't they terrifying? Aren't they really terrifying?' said plum in her darkblue suit. Then Gerald came, a scarlet silk Gudrun. 'Don't they look saurian? They are just like great kerchief round his loins, his towels over his arms. He seemed lizards. Did you ever see anything like Sir Joshua? But really, to flaunt himself a little in the sun, lingering and laughing, Ursula, he belongs to the primeval world, when great lizards strolling easily, looking white but natural in his nakedness.

crawled about.'

Then came Sir Joshua, in an overcoat, and lastly Hermione, Gudrun looked in dismay on Sir Joshua, who stood up to striding with stiff grace from out of a great mantle of purple the breast in the water, his long, greyish hair washed down silk, her head tied up in purple and gold. Handsome was her into his eyes, his neck set into thick, crude shoulders. He was stiff, long body, her straight-stepping white legs, there was a talking to Miss Bradley, who, seated on the bank above, plump static magnificence about her as she let the cloak float loosely and big and wet, looked as if she might roll and slither in the away from her striding. She crossed the lawn like some strange water almost like one of the slithering sealions in the Zoo.

memory, and passed slowly and statelily towards the water.

Ursula watched in silence. Gerald was laughing happily, There were three

ponds, in terraces descending the valley, between Hermione and the Italian. He reminded her of large and smooth and beautiful, lying in the sun. The water Dionysos, because his hair was really yellow, his figure so full ran over a little stone wall, over small rocks, splashing down and laughing. Hermione, in her large, stiff, sinister grace, leaned from one pond to the level below. The swans had gone out on near him, frightening, as if she were not responsible for what to the opposite bank, the reeds smelled sweet, a faint breeze she might do. He knew a certain danger in her, a convulsive touched the skin.

madness. But he only laughed the more, turning often to the Gerald had dived in, after Sir Joshua, and had swum to little Countess, who was flashing up her face at him.

the end of the pond. There he climbed out and sat on the They all dropped into the water, and were swimming to-

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gether like a shoal of seals. Hermione was powerful and un-that her criterion was the only one that mattered. The others conscious in the water, large and slow and powerful. Palestra were all outsiders, instinctively, whatever they might be so-was quick and silent as a water rat, Gerald wavered and flick-cially. And Gerald could not help it, he was bound to strive to ered, a white natural shadow. Then, one after the other, they come up to her criterion, fulfil her idea of a man and a hu-waded out, and went up to the house.

man-being.

But Gerald lingered a moment to speak to Gudrun.

After lunch, when all the others had withdrawn, Hermione

'You don't like the water?' he said.

and Gerald and Birkin lingered, finishing their talk. There She looked at him with a long, slow inscrutable look, as he had been some discussion, on the whole quite intellectual stood before her negligently, the water standing in beads all and artificial, about a new state, a new world of man. Suppos-over his skin.

ing this old social state WERE broken and destroyed, then,

'I like it very much,' she replied.

out of the chaos, what then?

He paused, expecting some sort of explanation.

The great social idea, said Sir Joshua, was the SOCIAL

'And you swim?'

equality of man. No, said Gerald, the idea was, that every

'Yes, I swim.'

man was fit for his own little bit of a task—let him do that, Still he would not ask her why she would not go in then.

and then please himself. The unifying principle was the work He could feel something ironic in her. He walked away, piqued in hand. Only work, the business of production, held men for the first time.

together. It was mechanical, but then society WAS a mecha-

'Why wouldn't you bathe?' he asked her again, later, when nism. Apart from work they were isolated, free to do as they he was once more the properly-dressed young Englishman.

liked.

She hesitated a moment before answering, opposing his

'Oh!' cried Gudrun. 'Then we shan't have names any persistence.

more—we shall be like the Germans, nothing but Herr

'Because I didn't like the crowd,' she replied.

Obermeister and Herr Untermeister. I can imagine it—"I am He laughed, her phrase seemed to re-echo in his conscious-Mrs Colliery-Manager Crich—I am Mrs Member-of-Par-ness. The flavour of her slang was piquant to him. Whether liament Roddice. I am Miss Art-Teacher Brangwen." Very he would or not, she signified the real world to him. He wanted pretty that.'

to come up to her standards, fulfil her expectations. He knew

'Things would work very much better, Miss Art-Teacher

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Brangwen,' said Gerald.

stroys, only destroys.'

'What things, Mr Colliery-Manager Crich? The relation This speech was received in silence, and almost immedi-between you and me, PAR EXEMPLE?'

ately the party rose from the table. But when the others had

'Yes, for example,' cried the Italian. 'That which is be-gone, Birkin turned round in bitter declamation, saying: tween men and women—!'

'It is just the opposite, just the contrary, Hermione. We

'That is non-social,' said Birkin, sarcastically.

are all different and unequal in spirit—it is only the SO-

'Exactly,' said Gerald. 'Between me and a woman, the soCIAL differences that are based on accidental material concial question does not enter. It is my own affair.'

ditions. We are all abstractly or mathematically equal, if you

'A ten-pound note on it,' said Birkin.

like. Every man has hunger and thirst, two eyes, one nose and

'You don't admit that a woman is a social being?' asked two legs. We're all the same in point of number. But spiritu-Ursula of Gerald.

ally, there is pure difference and neither equality nor inequal-

'She is both,' said Gerald. 'She is a social being, as far as ity counts. It is upon these two bits of knowledge that you society is concerned. But for her own private self, she is a free must found a state. Your democracy is an absolute lie—your agent, it is her own affair, what she does.'

brotherhood of man is a pure falsity, if you apply it further

'But won't it be rather difficult to arrange the two halves?'

than the mathematical abstraction. We all drank milk first, asked Ursula.

we all eat bread and meat, we all want to ride in motor-cars—

'Oh no,' replied Gerald. 'They arrange themselves natu-therein lies the beginning and the end of the brotherhood of rally—we see it now, everywhere.'

man. But no equality.

'Don't you laugh so pleasantly till you're out of the wood,'

'But I, myself, who am myself, what have I to do with said Birkin.

equality with any other man or woman? In the spirit, I am as Gerald knitted his brows in momentary irritation.

separate as one star is from another, as different in quality and

'Was I laughing?' he said.

quantity. Establish a state on THAT. One man isn't any bet-

'IF,' said Hermione at last, 'we could only realise, that in ter than another, not because they are equal, but because they the SPIRIT we are all one, all equal in the spirit, all brothers are intrinsically OTHER, that there is no term of compari-there—the rest wouldn't matter, there would be no more of son. The minute you begin to compare, one man is seen to be this carping and envy and this struggle for power, which de-far better than another, all the inequality you can imagine is **Contents**



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there by nature. I want every man to have his share in the before, and became minutely attentive to his author. His back world's goods, so that I am rid of his importunity, so that I was towards Hermione. She could not go on with her writing.

can tell him: "Now you've got what you want—you've got Her whole mind was a chaos, darkness breaking in upon it, your fair share of the world's gear. Now, you one-mouthed and herself struggling to gain control with her will, as a swim-fool, mind yourself and don't obstruct me."

mer struggles with the swirling water. But in spite of her ef-Hermione was looking at him with leering eyes, along her forts she was borne down, darkness seemed to break over her, cheeks. He could feel violent waves of hatred and loathing of she felt as if her heart was bursting. The terrible tension grew all he said, coming out of her. It was dynamic hatred and stronger and stronger, it was most fearful agony, like being loathing, coming strong and black out of the unconscious-walled up.

ness. She heard his words in her unconscious self, CON-And then she realised that his presence was the wall, his SCIOUSLY she was as if deafened, she paid no heed to them.

presence was destroying her. Unless she could break out, she

'It SOUNDS like megalomania, Rupert,' said Gerald, ge-must die most fearfully, walled up in horror. And he was the nially.

wall. She must break down the wall—she must break him Hermione gave a queer, grunting sound. Birkin stood back.

down before her, the awful obstruction of him who obstructed

'Yes, let it,' he said suddenly, the whole tone gone out of her life to the last.

It must be done, or she must perish most his voice, that had been so insistent, bearing everybody down.

horribly.

And he went away.

Terribly shocks ran over her body, like shocks of electric-But he felt, later, a little compunction. He had been vio-ity, as if many volts of electricity suddenly struck her down.

lent, cruel with poor Hermione. He wanted to recompense She was aware of him sitting silently there, an unthinkable her, to make it up. He had hurt her, he had been vindictive.

evil obstruction. Only this blotted out her mind, pressed out He wanted to be on good terms with her again.

her very breathing, his silent, stooping back, the back of his He went into her boudoir, a remote and very cushiony head.

place. She was sitting at her table writing letters. She lifted A terrible voluptuous thrill ran down her arms—she was her face abstractedly when he entered, watched him go to the going to know her voluptuous consummation. Her arms quiv-sofa, and sit down. Then she looked down at her paper again.

ered and were strong, immeasurably and irresistibly strong.

He took up a large volume which he had been reading What delight, what delight in strength, what delirium of plea-

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sure! She was going to have her consummation of voluptuous of lapis lazuli. It was her left hand, he realised again with ecstasy at last. It was coming! In utmost terror and agony, she horror that she was left-handed. Hurriedly, with a burrowing knew it was upon her now, in extremity of bliss. Her hand motion, he covered his head under the thick volume of closed on a blue, beautiful ball of lapis lazuli that stood on Thucydides, and the blow came down, almost breaking his her desk for a paper-weight. She rolled it round in her hand neck, and shattering his heart.

as she rose silently. Her heart was a pure flame in her breast, He was shattered, but he was not afraid. Twisting round she was purely unconscious in ecstasy. She moved towards to face her he pushed the table over and got away from her.

him and stood behind him for a moment in ecstasy. He, closed He was like a flask that is smashed to atoms, he seemed to within the spell, remained motionless and unconscious.

himself that he was all fragments, smashed to bits. Yet his Then swiftly, in a flame that drenched down her body movements were perfectly coherent and clear, his soul was like fluid lightning and gave her a perfect, unutterable conentire and unsurprised.

summation, unutterable satisfaction, she brought down the

'No you don't, Hermione,' he said in a low voice. 'I don't ball of jewel stone with all her force, crash on his head. But let you.'

her fingers were in the way and deadened the blow. Never-He saw her standing tall and livid and attentive, the stone theless, down went his head on the table on which his book clenched tense in her hand. lay, the stone slid aside and over his ear, it was one convulsion

'Stand away and let me go,' he said, drawing near to her.

of pure bliss for her, lit up by the crushed pain of her fingers.

As if pressed back by some hand, she stood away, watch-But it was not somehow complete. She lifted her arm high to ing him all the time without changing, like a neutralised an-aim once more, straight down on the head that lay dazed on gel confronting him.

the table. She must smash it, it must be smashed before her

'It is not good,' he said, when he had gone past her. 'It isn't ecstasy was consummated, fulfilled for ever. A thousand lives, I who will die. You hear?'

a thousand deaths mattered nothing now, only the fulfilment He kept his face to her as he went out, lest she should of this perfect ecstasy.

strike again. While he was on his guard, she dared not move.

She was not swift, she could only move slowly. A strong And he was on his guard, she was powerless. So he had gone, spirit in him woke him and made him lift his face and twist and left her standing.

to look at her. Her arm was raised, the hand clasping the ball She remained perfectly rigid, standing as she was for a

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long time. Then she staggered to the couch and lay down, to saturate himself with their contact.

and went heavily to sleep. When she awoke, she remembered But they were too soft. He went through the long grass to what she had done, but it seemed to her, she had only hit a clump of young firtrees, that were no higher than a man.

him, as any woman might do, because he tortured her. She The soft sharp boughs beat upon him, as he moved in keen was perfectly right. She knew that, spiritually, she was right.

pangs against them, threw little cold showers of drops on his In her own infallible purity, she had done what must be done.

belly, and beat his loins with their clusters of soft-sharp needles.

She was right, she was pure. A drugged, almost sinister reli-There was a thistle which pricked him vividly, but not too gious expression became permanent on her face.

much, because all his movements were too discriminate and Birkin, barely conscious, and yet perfectly direct in his soft. To lie down and roll in the sticky, cool young hyacinths, motion, went out of the house and straight across the park, to to lie on one's belly and cover one's back with handfuls of fine the open country, to the hills. The brilliant day had become wet grass, soft as a breath, soft and more delicate and more overcast, spots of rain were falling. He wandered on to a wild beautiful than the touch of any woman; and then to sting valley-side, where were thickets of hazel, many flowers, tufts one's thigh against the living dark bristles of the fir-boughs; of heather, and little clumps of young firtrees, budding with and then to feel the light whip of the hazel on one's shoul-soft paws. It was rather wet everywhere, there was a stream ders, stinging, and then to clasp the silvery birch-trunk against running down at the bottom of the valley, which was gloomy, one's breast, its

smoothness, its hardness, its vital knots and or seemed gloomy. He was aware that he could not regain his ridges—this was good, this was all very good, very satisfying.

consciousness, that he was moving in a sort of darkness.

Nothing else would do, nothing else would satisfy, except Yet he wanted something. He was happy in the wet hill-this coolness and subtlety of vegetation travelling into one's side, that was overgrown and obscure with bushes and flow-blood. How fortunate he was, that there was this lovely, subtle, ers. He wanted to touch them all, to saturate himself with the responsive vegetation, waiting for him, as he waited for it; touch of them all. He took off his clothes, and sat down na-how fulfilled he was, how happy!

ked among the primroses, moving his feet softly among the As he dried himself a little with his handkerchief, he primroses, his legs, his knees, his arms right up to the arm-thought about Hermione and the blow. He could feel a pain pits, lying down and letting them touch his belly, his breasts.

on the side of his head. But after all, what did it matter?

It was such a fine, cool, subtle touch all over him, he seemed What did Hermione matter, what did people matter alto-

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gether? There was this perfect cool loneliness, so lovely and delicate vegetation, that was so cool and perfect. He would fresh and unexplored. Really, what a mistake he had made, overlook the old grief, he would put away the old ethic, he thinking he wanted people, thinking he wanted a woman. He would be free in his new state.

did not want a woman—not in the least. The leaves and the He was aware of the pain in his head becoming more and primroses and the trees, they were really lovely and cool and more difficult every minute. He was walking now along the desirable, they really came into the blood and were added on road to the nearest station. It was raining and he had no hat.

to him. He was enrichened now immeasurably, and so glad.

But then plenty of cranks went out nowadays without hats, It was quite right of Hermione to want to kill him. What in the rain.

had he to do with her? Why should he pretend to have any-He wondered again how much of his heaviness of heart, a thing to do with human beings at all? Here was his world, he certain depression, was due to fear, fear lest anybody should wanted nobody and nothing but the lovely, subtle, responsive have seen him naked lying against the vegetation. What a vegetation, and himself, his own living self.

dread he had of mankind, of other people! It amounted al-It was necessary to go back into the world. That was true.

most to horror, to a sort of dream terror—his horror of being But that did not matter, so one knew where one belonged. He observed by some other people. If he were on an island, like knew now where he belonged. This was his place, his mar-Alexander Selkirk, with only the creatures and the trees, he riage place. The world was extraneous.

would be free and glad, there would be none of this heaviness, He climbed out of the valley, wondering if he were mad.

this misgiving. He could love the vegetation and be quite But if so, he preferred his own madness, to the regular sanity.

happy and unquestioned, by himself.

He rejoiced in his own madness, he was free. He did not want He had better send a note to Hermione: she might trouble that old sanity of the world, which was become so repulsive.

about him, and he did not want the onus of this. So at the He rejoiced in the new-found world of his madness. It was so station, he wrote saying:

fresh and delicate and so satisfying.

I will go on to town—I don't want to come back to As for the certain grief he felt at the same time, in his soul, Breadalby for the present. But it is quite all right—I don't that was only the remains of an old ethic, that bade a human want you to mind having biffed me, in the least. Tell the being adhere to humanity. But he was weary of the old ethic, others it is just one of my moods. You were quite right, to biff of the human being, and of humanity. He loved now the soft, me—because I know you wanted to. So there's the end of it.

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In the train, however, he felt ill. Every motion was insufferable pain, and he was sick. He dragged himself from the station into a cab, feeling his way step by step, like a blind man, and held up only by a dim will.

For a week or two he was ill, but he did not let Hermione know, and she thought he was sulking; there was a complete estrangement between them. She became rapt, abstracted in her conviction of exclusive righteousness. She lived in and by her own self-esteem, conviction of her own rightness of spirit.

Chapter 9.

Coal-dust.

Going home from school in the afternoon, the Brangwen girls descended the hill between the picturesque cottages of Willey Green till they came to the railway crossing. There they found the gate shut, because the colliery train was rumbling nearer. They could hear the small locomotive panting hoarsely as it advanced with caution between the embank-ments. The one-legged man in the little signal-hut by the road stared out from his security, like a crab from a snail-shell.

Whilst the two girls waited, Gerald Crich trotted up on a red Arab mare. He rode well and softly, pleased with the delicate quivering of the creature between his knees. And he was very picturesque, at least in Gudrun's eyes, sitting soft and **Contents**



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close on the slender red mare, whose long tail flowed on the Gudrun was looking at him with black-dilated, spellbound air. He saluted the two girls, and drew up at the crossing to eyes. But he sat glistening and obstinate, forcing the wheel-wait for the gate, looking down the railway for the

approaching mare, which spun and swerved like a wind, and yet could ing train. In spite of her ironic smile at his picturesqueness, not get out of the grasp of his will, nor escape from the mad Gudrun liked to look at him. He was well-set and easy, his clamour of terror that resounded through her, as the trucks face with its warm tan showed up his whitish, coarse mousthumped slowly, heavily, horrifying, one after the other, one tache, and his blue eyes were full of sharp light as he watched pursuing the other, over the rails of the crossing.

the distance.

The locomotive, as if wanting to see what could be done, The locomotive chuffed slowly between the banks, hid-put on the brakes, and back came the trucks rebounding on den. The mare did not like it. She began to wince away, as if the iron buffers, striking like horrible cymbals, clashing nearer hurt by the unknown noise. But Gerald pulled her back and and nearer in frightful strident concussions. The mare opened held her head to the gate. The sharp blasts of the chuffing her mouth and rose slowly, as if lifted up on a wind of terror.

engine broke with more and more force on her. The repeated Then suddenly her fore feet struck out, as she convulsed her-sharp blows of unknown, terrifying noise struck through her self utterly away from the horror. Back she went, and the two till she was rocking with terror. She recoiled like a spring let girls clung to each other, feeling she must fall backwards on go. But a glistening, half-smiling look came into Gerald's face.

top of him. But he leaned forward, his face shining with fixed He brought her back again, inevitably.

amusement, and at last he brought her down, sank her down, The noise was released, the little locomotive with her clank-and was bearing her back to the mark. But as strong as the ing steel connecting-rod emerged on the highroad, clanking pressure of his compulsion was the repulsion of her utter tersharply. The mare rebounded like a drop of water from hot ror, throwing her back away from the railway, so that she spun iron. Ursula and Gudrun pressed back into the hedge, in fear.

round and round, on two legs, as if she were in the centre of But Gerald was heavy on the mare, and forced her back. It some whirlwind. It made Gudrun faint with poignant dizzi-seemed as if he sank into her magnetically, and could thrust ness, which seemed to penetrate to her heart.

her back against herself.

'No—! No—! Let her go! Let her go, you fool, you

'The fool!' cried Ursula loudly. 'Why doesn't he ride away FOOL—!' cried Ursula at the top of her voice, completely till it's gone by?'

outside herself. And Gudrun hated her bitterly for being

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outside herself. It was unendurable that Ursula's voice was so When she recovered, her soul was calm and cold, without powerful and naked.

feeling. The trucks were still rumbling by, and the man and A sharpened look came on Gerald's face. He bit himself the mare were still fighting. But she herself was cold and down on the mare like a keen edge biting home, and FORCED

separate, she had no more feeling for them. She was quite her round. She roared as she breathed, her nostrils were two hard and cold and indifferent.

wide, hot holes, her mouth was apart, her eyes frenzied. It was They could see the top of the hooded guard's-van approacha repulsive sight. But he held on her unrelaxed, with an aling, the sound of the trucks was diminishing, there was hope most mechanical relentlessness, keen as a sword pressing in to of relief from the intolerable noise. The heavy panting of the her. Both man and horse were sweating with violence. Yet he half-stunned mare sounded automatically, the man seemed seemed calm as a ray of cold sunshine.

to be relaxing confidently, his will bright and unstained. The Meanwhile the eternal trucks were rumbling on, very slowly, guard's-van came up, and passed slowly, the guard staring out treading one after the other, one after the other, like a disgustin his transition on the spectacle in the road. And, through ing dream that has no end. The connecting chains were grinding the man in the closed wagon, Gudrun could see the whole and squeaking as the tension varied, the mare pawed and struck scene spectacularly, isolated and momentary, like a vision iso-away mechanically now, her terror fulfilled in her, for now the lated in eternity.

man encompassed her; her paws were blind and pathetic as Lovely, grateful silence seemed to trail behind the reced-she beat the air, the man closed round her, and brought her ing train. How sweet the silence is! Ursula looked with hatred down, almost as if she were part of his own physique.

on the buffers of the diminishing wagon. The gatekeeper stood

'And she's bleeding! She's bleeding!' cried Ursula, frantic ready at the door of his hut, to proceed to open the gate. But with opposition and hatred of Gerald. She alone understood Gudrun sprang suddenly forward, in front of the struggling him perfectly, in pure opposition.

horse, threw off the latch and flung the gates asunder, throw-Gudrun looked and saw the trickles of blood on the sides ing one-half to the keeper, and running with the other half, of the mare, and she turned white. And then on the very forwards. Gerald suddenly let go the horse and leaped for-wound the bright spurs came down, pressing relentlessly. The wards, almost on to Gudrun. She was not afraid. As he jerked world reeled and passed into nothingness for Gudrun, she aside the mare's head, Gudrun cried, in a

strange, high voice, could not know any more.

like a gull, or like a witch screaming out from the side of the

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road:

Then there was a pause.

'I should think you're proud.'

'But why does he do it?' cried Ursula, 'why does he? Does The words were distinct and formed. The man, twisting he think he's grand, when he's bullied a sensitive creature, ten aside on his dancing horse, looked at her in some surprise, times as sensitive as himself?'

some wondering interest. Then the mare's hoofs had danced Again there was a cautious pause. Then again the man three times on the drum-like sleepers of the crossing, and shook his head, as if he would say nothing, but would think man and horse were bounding springily, unequally up the the more.

road.

'I expect he's got to train the mare to stand to anything,'

The two girls watched them go. The gatekeeper hobbled he replied. 'A

purebred Harab—not the sort of breed as is thudding over the logs of the crossing, with his wooden leg.

used to round here—different sort from our sort altogether.

He had fastened the gate. Then he also turned, and called to They say as he got her from Constantinople.'

the girls:

'He would!' said Ursula. 'He'd better have left her to the

'A masterful young jockey, that; 'll have his own road, if Turks, I'm sure they would have had more decency towards ever anybody would.'

her.'

'Yes,' cried Ursula, in her hot, overbearing voice. 'Why The man went in to drink his can of tea, the girls went on couldn't he take the horse away, till the trucks had gone by?

down the lane, that was deep in soft black dust. Gudrun was He's a fool, and a bully. Does he think it's manly, to torture a as if numbed in her mind by the sense of indomitable soft horse? It's a living thing, why should he bully it and torture weight of the man, bearing down into the living body of the it?'

horse: the strong, indomitable thighs of the blond man clench-There was a pause, then the gatekeeper shook his head, ing the palpitating body of the mare into pure control; a sort and replied:

of soft white magnetic domination from the loins and thighs

'Yes, it's as nice a little mare as you could set eyes on—

and calves, enclosing and encompassing the mare heavily into beautiful little thing, beautiful. Now you couldn't see his fa-unutterable subordination, soft blood-subordination, terrible.

ther treat any animal like that—not you. They're as different On the left, as

the girls walked silently, the coal-mine lifted as they welly can be, Gerald Crich and his father—two dif-its great mounds and its patterned head-stocks, the black rail-ferent men, different made.'

way with the trucks at rest looked like a harbour just below, a

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large bay of railroad with anchored wagons.

receded down the dusty road, that had dwellings on one side, Near the second level-crossing, that went over many bright and dusty young corn on the other.

rails, was a farm belonging to the collieries, and a great round Then the elder man, with the whiskers round his face, globe of iron, a disused boiler, huge and rusty and perfectly said in a prurient manner to the young man: round, stood silently in a paddock by the road. The hens were 'What price that, eh? She'll do, won't she?'

pecking round it, some chickens were balanced on the drink-

'Which?' asked the young man, eagerly, with laugh.

ing trough, wagtails flew away in among trucks, from the water.

'Her with the red stockings. What d'you say? I'd give my On the other side

of the wide crossing, by the road-side, week's wages for five minutes; what!
—just for five minutes.'

was a heap of pale-grey stones for mending the roads, and a Again the young man laughed.

cart standing, and a middle-aged man with whiskers round

'Your missis 'ud have summat to say to you,' he replied.

his face was leaning on his shovel, talking to a young man in Gudrun had turned round and looked at the two men.

gaiters, who stood by the horse's head. Both men were facing They were to her sinister creatures, standing watching after the crossing.

her, by the heap of pale grey slag. She loathed the man with They saw the two girls appear, small, brilliant figures in whiskers round his face.

the near distance, in the strong light of the late afternoon.

'You're first class, you are,' the man said to her, and to the Both wore light, gay summer dresses, Ursula had an orange-distance.

coloured knitted coat, Gudrun a pale yellow, Ursula wore ca-

'Do you think it would be worth a week's wages?' said the nary yellow stockings, Gudrun bright rose, the figures of the younger man, musing.

two women seemed to glitter in progress over the wide bay of

'Do I? I'd put 'em bloody-well down this second—'

the railway crossing, white and orange and yellow and rose The younger man looked after Gudrun and Ursula objec-glittering in motion across a hot world silted with coal-dust.

tively, as if he wished to calculate what there might be, that The two men stood quite still in the heat, watching. The was worth his week's wages. He shook his head with fatal mis-elder was a short, hard-faced energetic man of middle age, the giving.

younger a labourer of twenty-three or so. They stood in si-

'No,' he said. 'It's not worth that to me.'

lence watching the advance of the sisters. They watched whilst

'Isn't?' said the old man. 'By God, if it isn't to me!'

the girls drew near, and whilst they passed, and whilst they And he went on shovelling his stones.

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The girls descended between the houses with slate roofs ent, why one seemed to live in another sphere. Now she realised and blackish brick walls. The heavy gold glamour of approach-that this was the world of powerful, underworld men who ing sunset lay over all the colliery district, and the ugliness spent most of their time in the darkness. In their voices she overlaid with beauty was like a narcotic to the senses. On the could hear the voluptuous resonance of darkness, the strong, roads silted with black dust, the rich light fell more warmly, dangerous underworld, mindless, inhuman. They sounded also more heavily, over all the amorphous squalor a kind of magic like strange machines, heavy, oiled. The voluptuousness was was cast, from

the glowing close of day.

like that of machinery, cold and iron.

'It has a foul kind of beauty, this place,' said Gudrun, evi-It was the same every evening when she came home, she dently suffering from fascination. 'Can't you feel in some way, seemed to move through a wave of disruptive force, that was a thick, hot attraction in it? I can. And it quite stupifies me.'

given off from the presence of thousands of vigorous, under-They were passing between blocks of miners' dwellings.

world, half-automatised colliers, and which went to the brain In the back yards of several dwellings, a miner could be seen and the heart, awaking a fatal desire, and a fatal callousness.

washing himself in the open on this hot evening, naked down There came over her a nostalgia for the place. She hated it, to the loins, his great trousers of moleskin slipping almost she knew how utterly cut off it was, how hideous and how away. Miners already cleaned were sitting on their heels, with sickeningly mindless. Sometimes she beat her wings like a their backs near the walls, talking and silent in pure physical new Daphne, turning not into a tree but a machine. And yet, well-being, tired, and taking physical rest. Their voices sounded she was overcome by the nostalgia. She struggled to get more out with strong intonation, and the broad dialect was curi-and more into accord with the atmosphere of the place, she ously caressing to the blood. It seemed to envelop Gudrun in craved to get her satisfaction of it.

a labourer's caress, there was in the whole atmosphere a reso-She felt herself drawn out at evening into the main street nance of physical men, a glamorous thickness of labour and of the town, that was uncreated and ugly, and yet surcharged maleness, surcharged in the air. But it was universal in the with this same potent atmosphere of intense, dark callous-district, and therefore unnoticed by the inhabitants.

ness. There were always miners about. They moved with their To Gudrun, however, it was potent and half-repulsive. She strange, distorted dignity, a certain beauty, and unnatural still-could never tell why Beldover was so

utterly different from ness in their bearing, a look of abstraction and half resigna-London and the south, why one's whole feelings were differ-tion in their pale, often gaunt faces. They belonged to an-

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other world, they had a strange glamour, their voices were full crossing to meet one another, or standing in little gangs and of an intolerable deep resonance, like a machine's burring, a circles, discussing, endlessly discussing. The sense of talk, buzz-music more maddening than the siren's long ago.

ing, jarring, half-secret, the endless mining and political wran-She found herself, with the rest of the common women, gling, vibrated in the air like discordant machinery. And it drawn out on Friday evenings to the little market. Friday was was their voices which affected Gudrun almost to swooning.

pay-day for the colliers, and Friday night was market night.

They aroused a strange, nostalgic ache of desire, something Every woman was abroad, every man was out, shopping with almost demoniacal, never to be fulfilled.

his wife, or gathering with his pals. The pavements were dark Like any other common girl of the district, Gudrun strolled for miles around with people

coming in, the little market-up and down, up and down the length of the brilliant two-place on the crown of the hill, and the main street of Beldover hundred paces of the pavement nearest the market-place. She were black with thickly-crowded men and women.

knew it was a vulgar thing to do; her father and mother could It was dark, the market-place was hot with kerosene flares, not bear it; but the nostalgia came over her, she must be among which threw a ruddy light on the grave faces of the purchas-the people. Sometimes she sat among the louts in the cinema: ing wives, and on the pale abstract faces of the men. The air rakish-looking, unattractive louts they were. Yet she must be was full of the sound of criers and of people talking, thick among them.

streams of people moved on the pavements towards the solid And, like any other common lass, she found her 'boy.' It crowd of the market. The shops were blazing and packed with was an electrician, one of the electricians introduced accord-women, in the streets were men, mostly men, miners of all ing to Gerald's new scheme. He was an earnest, clever man, a ages. Money was spent with almost lavish freedom.

scientist with a passion for sociology. He lived alone in a cot-The carts that came could not pass through. They had to tage, in lodgings, in Willey Green. He was a gentleman, and wait, the driver calling and shouting, till the dense crowd would sufficiently well-to-do. His landlady spread the reports about make way. Everywhere, young fellows from the outlying dis-him; he WOULD have a large wooden tub in his bedroom, tricts were making conversation with the girls, standing in the and every time he came in from work, he WOULD have pails road and at the corners. The doors of the public-houses were and pails of water brought up, to bathe in, then he put on open and full of light, men passed in and out in a continual clean shirt and underclothing EVERY day, and clean silk stream, everywhere men were calling out to one another, or socks; fastidious and exacting he was in these respects, but in Contents



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every other way, most ordinary and unassuming.

bloods, the gaunt, middle-aged men. All had a secret sense of Gudrun knew all these things. The Brangwen's house was power, and of inexpressible destructiveness, and of fatal half-one to which the gossip came naturally and inevitably. Palmer heartedness, a sort of rottenness in the will.

was in the first place a friend of Ursula's. But in his pale, Sometimes Gudrun would start aside, see it all, see how elegant, serious face there showed the same nostalgia that she was sinking in. And then she was filled with a fury of Gudrun felt. He too must walk up and down the street on contempt and anger. She felt she was sinking into one mass Friday evening. So he walked with Gudrun, and a friendship with the rest—all so close and intermingled and breathless. It was struck up between them. But he was not in love with was horrible. She stifled. She prepared for flight, feverishly Gudrun; he REALLY wanted Ursula, but for some strange she flew to her work. But soon she let go. She started off into reason, nothing could happen between her and him. He liked the country—the darkish, glamorous country. The spell was to have Gudrun about, as a fellow-mind—but that was all.

beginning to work again.

And she had no real feeling for him. He was a scientist, he had to have a woman to back him. But he was really impersonal, he had the fineness of an elegant piece of machinery.

He was too cold, too destructive to care really for women, too great an egoist. He was polarised by the men. Individually he detested and despised them. In the mass they fascinated him, as machinery fascinated him. They were a new sort of machinery to him—but incalculable, incalculable.

So Gudrun strolled the streets with Palmer, or went to the cinema with him. And his long, pale, rather elegant face flickered as he made his sarcastic remarks. There they were, the two of them: two elegants in one sense: in the other sense, two units, absolutely adhering to the people, teeming with the distorted colliers. The same secret seemed to be working in the souls of all alike, Gudrun, Palmer, the rakish young **Contents**



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Ursula was watching the butterflies, of which there were dozens near the water, little blue ones suddenly snapping out of nothingness into a jewel-life, a large black-and-red one standing upon a flower and breathing with his soft wings, intoxicatingly, breathing pure, ethereal sunshine; two white ones wrestling in the low air; there was a halo round them; ah, when they came tumbling nearer they were orangetips, and it was the orange that had made the halo. Ursula rose and drifted away, unconscious like the butterflies.

Chapter 10.

Gudrun, absorbed in a stupor of apprehension of surging water-plants, sat crouched on the shoal, drawing, not looking *Sketchbook*.

up for a long time, and then staring unconsciously, absorbedly at the rigid, naked, succulent stems. Her feet were bare, her One morning the sisters were sketching by the side of Willey hat lay on the bank opposite.

Water, at the remote end of the lake. Gudrun had waded out She started out of her trance, hearing the knocking of oars.

to a gravelly shoal, and was seated like a Buddhist, staring She looked round. There was a boat with a gaudy Japanese fixedly at the water-plants that rose succulent from the mud parasol, and a man in white, rowing. The woman was of the low shores. What she could see was mud, soft, oozy, Hermione, and the man was Gerald. She knew it instantly.

watery mud, and from its festering chill, water-plants rose And instantly she perished in the keen FRISSON of antici-up, thick and cool and fleshy, very straight and turgid, thrusting pation, an electric vibration in her veins, intense, much more out their leaves at right angles, and having dark lurid colours, intense than that which was always humming low in the at-dark green and blotches of black-purple and bronze. But she mosphere of Beldover.

could feel their turgid fleshy structure as in a sensuous vision, Gerald was her escape from the heavy slough of the pale, she KNEW how they rose out of the mud, she KNEW how underworld, automatic colliers. He started out of the mud.

they thrust out from themselves, how they stood stiff and He was master. She saw his back, the movement of his white succulent against the air.

loins. But not that—it was the whiteness he seemed to en-

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close as he bent forwards, rowing. He seemed to stoop to some-over his

nerves, because he felt, in some way she was com-thing. His glistening, whitish hair seemed like the electricity pelled by him. The exchange of feeling between them was of the sky.

strong and apart from their consciousness.

'There's Gudrun,' came Hermione's voice floating distinct And as if in a spell, Gudrun was aware of his body, stretch-over the water. 'We will go and speak to her. Do you mind?'

ing and surging like the marsh-fire, stretching towards her, Gerald looked round and saw the girl standing by the his hand coming straight forward like a stem. Her volup-water's edge, looking at him. He pulled the boat towards her, tuous, acute apprehension of him made the blood faint in her magnetically, without thinking of her. In his world, his con-veins, her mind went dim and unconscious. And he rocked scious world, she was still nobody. He knew that Hermione on the water perfectly, like the rocking of phosphorescence.

had a curious pleasure in treading down all the social differ-He looked round at the boat. It was drifting off a little. He ences, at least apparently, and he left it to her.

lifted the oar to bring it back. And the exquisite pleasure of

'How do you do, Gudrun?' sang Hermione, using the slowly arresting the boat, in the heavy-soft water, was com-Christian name in the fashionable manner. 'What are you plete as a swoon.

doing?'

'THAT'S what you have done,' said Hermione, looking

'How do you do, Hermione? I WAS sketching.'

searchingly at the plants on the shore, and comparing with

'Were you?' The boat drifted nearer, till the keel ground Gudrun's drawing. Gudrun looked round in the direction of on the bank. 'May we see? I should

like to SO much.'

Hermione's long, pointing finger. 'That is it, isn't it?' repeated It was no use resisting Hermione's deliberate intention.

Hermione, needing confirmation.

'Well—' said Gudrun reluctantly, for she always hated to

'Yes,' said Gudrun automatically, taking no real heed.

have her unfinished work exposed—'there's nothing in the

'Let me look,' said Gerald, reaching forward for the book.

least interesting.'

But Hermione ignored him, he must not presume, before she

'Isn't there? But let me see, will you?'

had finished. But he, his will as unthwarted and as unflinch-Gudrun reached out the sketch-book, Gerald stretched ing as hers, stretched forward till he touched the book. A from the boat to take it. And as he did so, he remembered little shock, a storm of revulsion against him, shook Hermione Gudrun's last words to him, and her face lifted up to him as unconsciously. She released the book when he had not prophe sat on the swerving horse. An intensification of pride went erly got it, and it tumbled against the side of the boat and **Contents**



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bounced into the water.

'I assure you,' said Gudrun, with cutting distinctness, 'the

'There!' sang Hermione, with a strange ring of malevolent drawings are quite as good as ever they were, for my purpose.

victory. 'I'm so sorry, so awfully sorry. Can't you get it, Gerald?'

I want them only for reference.'

This last was said in a note of anxious sneering that made

'But can't I give you a new book? I wish you'd let me do Gerald's veins tingle with fine hate for her. He leaned far out that. I feel so truly sorry. I feel it was all my fault.'

of the boat, reaching down into the water. He could feel his

'As far as I saw,' said Gudrun, 'it wasn't your fault at all. If position was ridiculous, his loins exposed behind him.

there was any FAULT, it was Mr Crich's. But the whole thing

'It is of no importance,' came the strong, clanging voice of is ENTIRELY trivial, and it really is ridiculous to take any Gudrun. She seemed to touch him. But he reached further, notice of it.'

the boat swayed violently. Hermione, however, remained un-Gerald watched Gudrun closely, whilst she repulsed perturbed. He grasped the book, under the water, and brought Hermione. There was a body of cold power in her. He watched it up, dripping.

her with an insight that amounted to clairvoyance. He saw

'I'm so dreadfully sorry—dreadfully sorry,' repeated her a dangerous, hostile spirit, that could stand undiminished Hermione. 'I'm afraid it was all my fault.'

and unabated. It was so finished, and of such perfect gesture,

'It's of no importance—really, I assure you—it doesn't moreover.

matter in the least,' said Gudrun loudly, with emphasis, her

'I'm awfully glad if it doesn't matter,' he said; 'if there's no face flushed scarlet. And she held out her hand impatiently real harm done.'

for the wet book, to have done with the scene. Gerald gave it She looked back at him, with her fine blue eyes, and sig-to her. He was not quite himself.

nalled full into his spirit, as she said, her voice ringing with

'I'm so dreadfully sorry,' repeated Hermione, till both intimacy almost caressive now it was addressed to him: Gerald and Gudrun were exasperated. 'Is there nothing that

'Of course, it doesn't matter in the LEAST.'

can be done?'

The bond was established between them, in that look, in

'In what way?' asked Gudrun, with cool irony.

her tone. In her tone, she made the understanding clear—

'Can't we save the drawings?'

they were of the same kind, he and she, a sort of diabolic There was a moment's pause, wherein Gudrun made evi-freemasonry subsisted between them. Henceforward, she knew, dent all her refutation of Hermione's persistence.

she had her power over him. Wherever they met, they would

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be secretly associated. And he would be helpless in the association with her. Her soul exulted.

'Good-bye! I'm so glad you forgive me. Goood-bye!'

Hermione sang her farewell, and waved her hand. Gerald automatically took the oar and pushed off. But he was looking all the time, with a glimmering, subtly-smiling admiration in his eyes, at Gudrun, who stood on the shoal shaking the wet book in her hand. She turned away and ignored the receding boat. But Gerald looked back as he rowed, behold-ing her, forgetting what he was doing.

'Aren't we going too much to the left?' sang Hermione, as Chapter 11.

she sat ignored under her coloured parasol.

An island.

Gerald looked round without replying, the oars balanced and glancing in the sun.

Meanwhile Ursula had wandered on from Willey Water

'I think it's all right,' he said good-humouredly, begin-along the course of the bright little stream. The afternoon ning to row again without thinking of what he was doing.

was full of larks' singing. On the bright hillsides was a sub-And Hermione disliked him extremely for his good-humoured dued smoulder of gorse. A few forget-me-nots flowered by obliviousness, she was nullified, she could not regain ascen-the water. There was a rousedness and a glancing everywhere.

dancy.

She strayed absorbedly on, over the brooks. She wanted to go to the mill-pond above. The big mill-house was deserted, save for a labourer and his wife who lived in the kitchen. So she passed through the empty farm-yard and through the wilderness of a garden, and mounted the bank by the sluice.

When she got to the top, to see the old, velvety surface of the pond before her, she noticed a man on the bank, tinkering with a punt. It was Birkin sawing and hammering away.

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She stood at the head of the sluice, looking at him. He was dark lustre of very deep water. There were two small islands unaware of anybody's presence. He looked very busy, like a overgrown with bushes and a few trees, towards the

middle.

wild animal, active and intent. She felt she ought to go away, Birkin pushed himself off, and veered clumsily in the pond.

he would not want her. He seemed to be so much occupied.

Luckily the punt drifted so that he could catch hold of a But she did not want to go away. Therefore she moved along willow bough, and pull it to the island.

the bank till he would look up.

'Rather overgrown,' he said, looking into the interior, 'but Which he soon did. The moment he saw her, he dropped very nice. I'll come and fetch you. The boat leaks a little.'

his tools and came forward, saying:

In a moment he was with her again, and she stepped into

'How do you do? I'm making the punt water-tight. Tell the wet punt.

me if you think it is right.'

'It'll float us all right,' he said, and manoeuvred again to She went along with him.

the island.

'You are your father's daughter, so you can tell me if it will They landed under a willow tree. She shrank from the do,' he said.

little jungle of rank plants before her, evil-smelling figwort She bent to look at the patched punt.

and hemlock. But he explored into it.

'I am sure I am my father's daughter,' she said, fearful of

'I shall mow this down,' he said, 'and then it will be ro-having to judge. 'But I don't know anything about carpentry.

mantic—like Paul et Virginie.'

It LOOKS right, don't you think?'

'Yes, one could have lovely Watteau picnics here,' cried

'Yes, I think. I hope it won't let me to the bottom, that's Ursula with enthusiasm.

all. Though even so, it isn't a great matter, I should come up His face darkened.

again. Help me to get it into the water, will you?'

'I don't want Watteau picnics here,' he said.

With combined efforts they turned over the heavy punt

'Only your Virginie,' she laughed.

and set it afloat.

'Virginie enough,' he smiled wryly. 'No, I don't want her

'Now,' he said, 'I'll try it and you can watch what hap-either.'

pens. Then if it carries, I'll take you over to the island.'

Ursula looked at him closely. She had not seen him since

'Do,' she cried, watching anxiously.

Breadalby. He was very thin and hollow, with a ghastly look The pond was large, and had that perfect stillness and the in his face.

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'You have been ill; haven't you?' she asked, rather repulsed.

frightened she always laughed and pretended to be jaunty.

'Yes,' he replied coldly.

'Your poor nose!' she said, looking at that feature of his They had sat down under the willow tree, and were look-face.

ing at the pond, from their retreat on the island.

'No wonder it's ugly,' he replied.

'Has it made you frightened?' she asked.

She was silent for some minutes, struggling with her own

'What of?' he asked, turning his eyes to look at her. Some-self-deception. It was an instinct in her, to deceive herself.

thing in him, inhuman and unmitigated, disturbed her, and

'But I'M happy—I think life is AWFULLY jolly,' she shook her out of her ordinary self.

said.

'It IS frightening to be very ill, isn't it?' she said.

'Good,' he answered, with a certain cold indifference.

'It isn't pleasant,' he said. 'Whether one is really afraid of She reached for a bit of paper which had wrapped a small death, or not, I have never decided. In one mood, not a bit, in piece of chocolate she had found in her pocket, and began another, very much.'

making a boat. He watched her without heeding her. There

'But doesn't it make you feel ashamed? I think it makes was something strangely pathetic and tender in her moving, one so ashamed, to be ill—illness is so terribly humiliating, unconscious fingertips, that were agitated and hurt, really.

don't you think?'

'I DO enjoy things—don't you?' she asked.

He considered for some minutes.

'Oh yes! But it infuriates me that I can't get right, at the

'May-be,' he said. 'Though one knows all the time one's really growing part of me. I feel all tangled and messed up, life isn't really right, at the source. That's the humiliation. I and I CAN'T get straight anyhow. I don't know what really don't see that the illness counts so much, after that. One is ill to DO. One must do something somewhere.'

because one doesn't live properly—can't. It's the failure to live

'Why should you always be DOING?' she retorted. 'It is that makes one ill, and humiliates one.'

so plebeian. I think it is much better to be really patrician,

'But do you fail to live?' she asked, almost jeering.

and to do nothing but just be oneself, like a walking flower.'

'Why yes—I don't make much of a success of my days.

'I quite agree,' he said, 'if one has burst into blossom. But One seems always to be bumping one's nose against the blank I can't get my flower to blossom anyhow. Either it is blighted wall ahead.'

in the bud, or has got the smother-fly, or it isn't nourished.

Ursula laughed. She was frightened, and when she was Curse it, it isn't even a bud. It is a contravened knot.'

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Again she laughed. He was so very fretful and exasper-There was a long pause. His voice had become hot and ated. But she was anxious and puzzled. How was one to get very sarcastic. Ursula was troubled and bewildered, they were out, anyhow. There must be a way out somewhere.

both oblivious of everything but their own immersion.

There was a silence, wherein she wanted to cry. She reached

'But even if everybody is wrong—where are you right?'

for another bit of chocolate paper, and began to fold another she cried, 'where

are you any better?'

boat.

'I?—I'm not right,' he cried back. 'At least my only right-

'And why is it,' she asked at length, 'that there is no flow-ness lies in the fact that I know it. I detest what I am, outering, no dignity of human life now?'

wardly. I loathe myself as a human being. Humanity is a huge

'The whole idea is dead. Humanity itself is dry-rotten, aggregate lie, and a huge lie is less than a small truth. Hu-really. There are myriads of human beings hanging on the manity is less, far less than the individual, because the indi-bush—and they look very nice and rosy, your healthy young vidual may sometimes be capable of truth, and humanity is a men and women. But they are apples of Sodom, as a matter tree of lies. And they say that love is the greatest thing; they of fact, Dead Sea Fruit, gall-apples. It isn't true that they have persist in SAYING this, the foul liars, and just look at what any significance—their insides are full of bitter, corrupt ash.'

they do! Look at all the millions of people who repeat every

'But there ARE good people,' protested Ursula.

minute that love is the greatest, and charity is the greatest—

'Good enough for the life of today. But mankind is a dead and see what they are doing all the time. By their works ye tree, covered with fine brilliant galls of people.'

shall know them, for dirty liars and cowards, who daren't stand Ursula could not help stiffening herself against this, it was by their own actions, much less by their own words.'

too picturesque and final. But neither could she help making

'But,' said Ursula sadly, 'that doesn't alter the fact that love him go on.

is the greatest, does it? What they DO doesn't alter the truth

'And if it is so, WHY is it?' she asked, hostile. They were of what they say, does it?'

rousing each other to a fine passion of opposition.

'Completely, because if what they say WERE true, then

'Why, why are people all balls of bitter dust? Because they they couldn't help fulfilling it. But they maintain a lie, and so won't fall off the tree when they're ripe. They hang on to their they run amok at last. It's a lie to say that love is the greatest.

old positions when the position is over-past, till they become You might as well say that hate is the greatest, since the oppo-infested with little worms and dry-rot.'

site of everything balances. What people want is hate—hate

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and nothing but hate. And in the name of righteousness and

'I would die like a shot, to know that the earth would love, they get it. They distil themselves with nitroglycerine, really be cleaned of all the people. It is

the most beautiful and all the lot of them, out of very love. It's the lie that kills. If we freeing thought. Then there would NEVER be another foul want hate, let us have it—death, murder, torture, violent de-humanity created, for a universal defilement.'

struction—let us have it: but not in the name of love. But I

'No,' said Ursula, 'there would be nothing.'

abhor humanity, I wish it was swept away. It could go, and

'What! Nothing? Just because humanity was wiped out?

there would be no ABSOLUTE loss, if every human being You flatter yourself. There'd be everything.'

perished tomorrow. The reality would be untouched. Nay, it

'But how, if there were no people?'

would be better. The real tree of life would then be rid of the

'Do you think that creation depends on MAN! It merely most ghastly, heavy crop of Dead Sea Fruit, the intolerable doesn't. There are the trees and the grass and birds. I much burden of myriad simulacra of people, an infinite weight of prefer to think of the lark rising up in the morning upon a mortal lies.'

humanless world. Man is a mistake, he must go. There is the

'So you'd like everybody in the world destroyed?' said grass, and hares and adders, and the unseen hosts, actual an-Ursula.

gels that go about freely when a dirty humanity doesn't inter-

'I should indeed.'

rupt them—and good pure-tissued demons: very nice.'

'And the world empty of people?'

It pleased Ursula, what he said, pleased her very much, as

'Yes truly. You yourself, don't you find it a beautiful clean a phantasy. Of course it was only a pleasant fancy. She herself thought, a world empty of people, just uninterrupted grass, knew too well the actuality of humanity, its hideous actuality.

and a hare sitting up?'

She knew it could not disappear so cleanly and conveniently.

The pleasant sincerity of his voice made Ursula pause to It had a long way to go yet, a long and hideous way. Her consider her own proposition. And really it WAS attractive: a subtle, feminine, demoniacal soul knew it well.

clean, lovely, humanless world. It was the REALLY desir-

'If only man was swept off the face of the earth, creation able. Her heart hesitated, and exulted. But still, she was dis-would go on so marvellously, with a new start, non-human.

satisfied with HIM.

Man is one of the mistakes of creation—like the ichthyosauri.

'But,' she objected, 'you'd be dead yourself, so what good If only he were gone again, think what lovely things would would it do you?'

come out of the liberated days;—things straight out of the

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fire.'

to him. It was despicable, a very insidious form of prostitu-

'But man will never be gone,' she said, with insidious, diation.

bolical knowledge of the horrors of persistence. 'The world

'But,' she said, 'you believe in individual love, even if you will go with him.'

don't believe in loving humanity—?'

'Ah no,' he answered, 'not so. I believe in the proud angels

'I don't believe in love at all—that is, any more than I and the demons that are our fore-runners. They will destroy believe in hate, or in grief. Love is one of the emotions like all us, because we are not proud enough. The ichthyosauri were the others—and so it is all right whilst you feel it But I can't not proud: they crawled and floundered as we do. And be-see how it becomes an absolute. It is just part of human rela-sides, look at elder-flowers and bluebells—they are a sign that tionships, no more. And it is only part of ANY human rela-pure creation takes place—even the butterfly. But humanity tionship. And why one should be required ALWAYS to feel never gets beyond the caterpillar stage—it rots in the chrysa-it, any more than one always feels sorrow or distant joy, I lis, it never will have wings. It is anticreation, like monkeys cannot conceive. Love isn't a desideratum—it is an emotion and baboons.'

you feel or you don't feel, according to circumstance.'

Ursula watched him as he talked. There seemed a certain

'Then why do you care about people at all?' she asked, 'if impatient fury in him, all the while, and at the same time a you don't believe in love? Why do you bother about human-great amusement in everything, and a final tolerance. And it ity?'

was this tolerance she mistrusted, not the fury. She saw that,

'Why do I? Because I can't get away from it.'

all the while, in spite of himself, he would have to be trying

'Because you love it,' she persisted.

to save the world. And this knowledge, whilst it comforted It irritated him.

her heart somewhere with a little self-satisfaction, stability,

'If I do love it,' he said, 'it is my disease.'

yet filled her with a certain sharp contempt and hate of him.

'But it is a disease you don't want to be cured of,' she said, She wanted him to herself, she hated the Salvator Mundi with some cold sneering.

touch. It was something diffuse and generalised about him, He was silent now, feeling she wanted to insult him.

which she could not stand. He would behave in the same way,

'And if you don't believe in love, what DO you believe in?'

say the same things, give himself as completely to anybody she asked mocking. 'Simply in the end of the world, and grass?'

who came along, anybody and everybody who liked to appeal He was beginning to feel a fool.

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'I believe in the unseen hosts,' he said.

'The point about love,' he said, his consciousness quickly

'And nothing else? You believe in nothing visible, except adjusting itself, 'is that we hate the word because we have grass and birds? Your world is a poor show.'

vulgarised it. It ought to be prescribed, tabooed from utter-

'Perhaps it is,' he said, cool and superior now he was of-ance, for many years, till we get a new, better idea.'

fended, assuming a certain insufferable aloof superiority, and There was a beam of understanding between them.

withdrawing into his distance.

'But it always means the same thing,' she said.

Ursula disliked him. But also she felt she had lost some-

'Ah God, no, let it not mean that any more,' he cried. 'Let thing. She looked at him as he sat crouched on the bank.

the old meanings go.'

There was a certain priggish Sunday-school stiffness over him,

'But still it is love,' she persisted. A strange, wicked yellow priggish and detestable. And yet, at the same time, the moul-light shone at him in her eyes.

ding of him was so quick and attractive, it gave such a great He hesitated, baffled, withdrawing.

sense of freedom: the moulding of his brows, his chin, his

'No,' he said, 'it isn't. Spoken like that, never in the world.

whole physique, something so alive, somewhere, in spite of You've no business to utter the word.'

the look of sickness.

'I must leave it to you, to take it out of the Ark of the And it was this duality in feeling which he created in her, Covenant at the right moment,' she mocked.

that made a fine hate of him quicken in her bowels. There Again they looked at each other. She suddenly sprang up, was his wonderful, desirable liferapidity, the rare quality of turned her back to him, and walked away. He too rose slowly an utterly desirable man: and there was at the same time this and went to the water's edge, where, crouching, he began to ridiculous, mean effacement into a Salvator Mundi and a amuse himself unconsciously. Picking a daisy he dropped it Sunday-school teacher, a prig of the stiffest type.

on the pond, so that the stem was a keel, the flower floated He looked up at her. He saw her face strangely enkindled, like a little water lily, staring with its open face up to the sky.

as if suffused from within by a powerful sweet fire. His soul It turned slowly round, in a slow, slow Dervish dance, as it was arrested in wonder. She was enkindled in her own living veered away.

fire. Arrested in wonder and in pure, perfect attraction, he He watched it, then

dropped another daisy into the water, moved towards her. She sat like a strange queen, almost su-and after that another, and sat watching them with bright, pernatural in her glowing smiling richness.

absolved eyes, crouching near on the bank. Ursula turned to

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look. A strange feeling possessed her, as if something were become individual. Don't the botanists put it highest in the taking place. But it was all intangible. And some sort of con-line of development? I believe they do.'

trol was being put on her. She could not know. She could

'The compositae, yes, I think so,' said Ursula, who was only watch the brilliant little discs of the daisies veering slowly never very sure of anything. Things she knew perfectly well, in travel on the dark, lustrous water. The little flotilla was at one moment, seemed to become doubtful the next.

drifting into the light, a company of white specks in the dis-

'Explain it so, then,' he said. 'The daisy is a perfect little tance.

democracy, so it's the highest of flowers, hence its charm.'

'Do let us go to the shore, to follow them,' she said, afraid

'No,' she cried, 'no—never. It isn't democratic.'

of being any longer imprisoned on the island. And they pushed

'No,' he admitted. 'It's the golden mob of the proletariat, off in the punt.

surrounded by a showy white fence of the idle rich.'

She was glad to be on the free land again. She went along

'How hateful—your hateful social orders!' she cried.

the bank towards the sluice. The daisies were scattered broad-

'Quite! It's a daisy—we'll leave it alone.'

cast on the pond, tiny radiant things, like an exaltation, points

'Do. Let it be a dark horse for once,' she said: 'if anything of exaltation here and there. Why did they move her so can be a dark horse to you,' she added satirically.

strongly and mystically?

They stood aside, forgetful. As if a little stunned, they

'Look,' he said, 'your boat of purple paper is escorting them, both were motionless, barely conscious. The little conflict into and they are a convoy of rafts.'

which they had fallen had torn their consciousness and left Some of the daisies came slowly towards her, hesitating, them like two impersonal forces, there in contact.

making a shy bright little cotillion on the dark clear water.

He became aware of the lapse. He wanted to say some-Their gay bright candour moved her so much as they came thing, to get on to a new more ordinary footing. near, that she was almost in tears.

'You know,' he said, 'that I am having rooms here at the

'Why are they so lovely,' she cried. 'Why do I think them mill? Don't you think we can have some good times?'

so lovely?'

'Oh are you?' she said, ignoring all his implication of ad-

'They are nice flowers,' he said, her emotional tones put-mitted intimacy. ting a constraint on him.

He adjusted himself at once, became normally distant.

'You know that a daisy is a company of florets, a concourse,

'If I find I can live sufficiently by myself,' he continued, 'I

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shall give up my work altogether. It has become dead to me. I seemed disturbed by it. She did not notice. Only she thought don't believe in the humanity I pretend to be part of, I don't he seemed uneasy.

care a straw for the social ideals I live by, I hate the dying

'As a matter of fact,' he said, in rather a small voice, 'I organic form of social mankind—so it can't be anything but believe that is Hermione come now, with Gerald Crich. She trumpery, to work at education. I shall drop it as soon as I am wanted to see the rooms before they are furnished.'

clear enough—tomorrow perhaps—and be by myself.'

'I know,' said Ursula. 'She will superintend the furnishing

'Have you enough to live on?' asked Ursula.

for you.'

'Yes—I've about four hundred a year. That makes it easy

'Probably. Does it matter?'

for me.'

'Oh no, I should think not,' said Ursula. 'Though person-There was a pause.

ally, I can't bear her. I think she is a lie, if you like, you who are

'And what about Hermione?' asked Ursula.

always talking about lies.' Then she ruminated for a moment,

'That's over, finally—a pure failure, and never could have when she broke out: 'Yes, and I do mind if she furnishes your been anything else.'

rooms—I do mind. I mind that you keep her hanging on at

'But you still know each other?'

all.'

'We could hardly pretend to be strangers, could we?'

He was silent now, frowning.

There was a stubborn pause.

'Perhaps,' he said. 'I don't WANT her to furnish the rooms

'But isn't that a half-measure?' asked Ursula at length.

here—and I don't keep her hanging on. Only, I needn't be

'I don't think so,' he said. 'You'll be able to tell me if it is.'

churlish to her, need I? At any rate, I shall have to go down Again there was a pause of some minutes' duration. He and see them now. You'll come, won't you?'

was thinking.

'I don't think so,' she said coldly and irresolutely.

'One must throw everything away, everything—let every-

'Won't you? Yes do. Come and see the rooms as well. Do thing go, to get the one last thing one wants,' he said.

come.'

'What thing?' she asked in challenge.

'I don't know—freedom together,' he said.

She had wanted him to say 'love.'

There was heard a loud barking of the dogs below. He

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triumphant, and the woman's voice went up and up against them, and the birds replied with wild animation.

'Here's Rupert!' shouted Gerald in the midst of the din.

He was suffering badly, being very sensitive in the ear.

'O-o-h them birds, they won't let you speak—!' shrilled the labourer's wife in disgust. 'I'll cover them up.'

And she darted here and there, throwing a duster, an apron, a towel, a table-cloth over the cages of the birds.

'Now will you stop it, and let a body speak for your row,'

Chapter 12.

she said, still in a voice that was too high.

The party watched her. Soon the cages were covered, they *Carpeting*.

had a strange funereal look. But from under the towels odd defiant trills and bubblings still shook out.

He set off down the bank, and she went unwillingly with

'Oh, they won't go on,' said Mrs Salmon reassuringly.

him. Yet she would not have stayed away, either.

'They'll go to sleep now.'

'We know each other well, you and I, already,' he said. She

'Really,' said Hermione, politely.

did not answer.

'They will,' said Gerald. 'They will go to sleep automati-In the large darkish kitchen of the mill, the labourer's wife cally, now the impression of evening is produced.'

was talking shrilly to Hermione and Gerald, who stood, he in

'Are they so easily deceived?' cried Ursula.

white and she in a glistening bluish foulard, strangely lumi-

'Oh, yes,' replied Gerald. 'Don't you know the story of nous in the dusk of the room; whilst from the cages on the Fabre, who, when he was a boy, put a hen's head under her walls, a dozen or more canaries sang at the top of their voices.

wing, and she straight away went to sleep? It's quite true.'

The cages were all placed round a small square window at the

'And did that make him a naturalist?' asked Birkin.

back, where the sunshine came in, a beautiful beam, filtering

'Probably,' said Gerald.

through green leaves of a tree. The voice of Mrs Salmon shrilled Meanwhile Ursula was peeping under one of the cloths.

against the noise of the birds, which rose ever more wild and There sat the canary in a corner, bunched and fluffed up for

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sleep.

'Were you quite comfortable?' The curious, sinister, rapt

'How ridiculous!' she cried. 'It really thinks the night has look was on Hermione's face, she shrugged her bosom in a come! How absurd! Really, how can one have any respect for convulsed movement, and seemed like one half in a trance.

a creature that is so easily taken in!'

'Quite comfortable,' he replied.

'Yes,' sang Hermione, coming also to look. She put her There was a long pause, whilst Hermione looked at him hand on Ursula's arm and chuckled a low laugh. 'Yes, doesn't for a long time, from under her heavy, drugged eyelids.

he look comical?' she chuckled. 'Like a stupid husband.'

'And you think you'll be happy here?' she said at last.

Then, with her hand still on Ursula's arm, she drew her

'I'm sure I shall.'

away, saying, in her mild sing-song:

'I'm sure I shall do anything for him as I can,' said the

'How did you come here? We saw Gudrun too.'

labourer's wife. 'And I'm sure our master will; so I HOPE

'I came to look at the pond,' said Ursula, 'and I found Mr he'll find himself comfortable.'

Birkin there.'

Hermione turned and looked at her slowly.

'Did you? This is quite a Brangwen land, isn't it!'

'Thank you so much,' she said, and then she turned com-

'I'm afraid I hoped so,' said Ursula. 'I ran here for refuge, pletely away again. She recovered her position, and lifting her when I saw you down the lake, just putting off.'

face towards him, and addressing him exclusively, she said:

'Did you! And now we've run you to earth.'

'Have you measured the rooms?'

Hermione's eyelids lifted with an uncanny movement,

'No,' he said, 'I've been mending the punt.'

amused but overwrought. She had always her strange, rapt

'Shall we do it now?' she said slowly, balanced and dispas-look, unnatural and irresponsible.

sionate.

'I was going on,' said Ursula. 'Mr Birkin wanted me to see

'Have you got a tape measure, Mrs Salmon?' he said, turn-the rooms. Isn't it delightful to live here? It is perfect.'

ing to the woman.

'Yes,' said Hermione, abstractedly. Then she turned right

'Yes sir, I think I can find one,' replied the woman, bus-away from Ursula, ceased to know her existence.

tling immediately to a basket. 'This is the only one I've got, if

'How do you feel, Rupert?' she sang in a new, affectionate it will do.'

tone, to Birkin.

Hermione took it, though it was offered to him.

'Very well,' he replied.

'Thank you so much,' she said. 'It will do very nicely. Thank

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you so much.' Then she turned to Birkin, saying with a little was empty, but clean and sunny. There was a window looking gay movement: 'Shall we do it now, Rupert?'

on to the tangled front garden.

'What about the others, they'll be bored,' he said reluc-

'This is the dining room,' said Hermione. 'We'll measure tantly.

it this way, Rupert—you go down there—'

'Do you mind?' said Hermione, turning to Ursula and

'Can't I do it for you,' said Gerald, coming to take the end Gerald vaguely.

of the tape.

'Not in the least,' they replied.

'No, thank you,' cried Hermione, stooping to the ground

'Which room shall we do first?' she said, turning again to in her bluish, brilliant foulard. It was a great joy to her to DO

Birkin, with the same gaiety, now she was going to DO somethings, and to have the ordering of the job, with Birkin. He thing with him.

obeyed her subduedly. Ursula and Gerald looked on. It was a

'We'll take them as they come,' he said.

peculiarity of Hermione's, that at every moment, she had one

'Should I be getting your teas ready, while you do that?'

intimate, and turned all the rest of those present into onlook-said the labourer's wife, also gay because SHE had something ers. This raised her into a state of triumph.

to do.

They measured and discussed in the diningroom, and

'Would you?' said Hermione, turning to her with the cu-Hermione decided what the floor coverings must be. It sent rious motion of intimacy that seemed to envelop the woman, her into a strange, convulsed anger, to be thwarted. Birkin draw her almost to Hermione's breast, and which left the others always let her have her way, for the moment.

standing apart. 'I should be so glad. Where shall we have it?'

Then they moved across, through the hall, to the other

'Where would you like it? Shall it be in here, or out on front room, that was a little smaller than the first.

the grass?'

'This is the study,' said Hermione. 'Rupert, I have a rug

'Where shall we have tea?' sang Hermione to the com-that I want you to have for here. Will you let me give it to pany at large.

you? Do—I want to give it you.'

'On the bank by the pond. And WE'LL carry the things

'What is it like?' he asked ungraciously.

up, if you'll just get them ready, Mrs Salmon,' said Birkin.

'You haven't seen it. It is chiefly rose red, then blue, a me-

'All right,' said the pleased woman.

tallic, mid-blue, and a very soft dark blue. I think you would The party moved down the passage into the front room. It like it. Do you think you would?'

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'It sounds very nice,' he replied. 'What is it? Oriental?

ing the evidence of his presence, in all the inanimate things.

With a pile?'

She felt the bed and examined the coverings.

'Yes. Persian! It is made of camel's hair, silky. I think it is

'Are you SURE you were quite comfortable?' she said, called Bergamos—twelve feet by seven—. Do you think it pressing the pillow.

will do?'

'Perfectly,' he replied coldly.

'It would DO,' he said. 'But why should you give me an

'And were you warm? There is no down quilt. I am sure expensive rug? I can manage perfectly well with my old Ox-you need one. You mustn't have a great pressure of clothes.'

ford Turkish.'

'I've got one,' he said. 'It is coming down.'

'But may I give it to you? Do let me.'

They measured the rooms, and lingered over every con-

'How much did it cost?'

sideration. Ursula stood at the window and watched the woman She looked at him, and said:

carrying the tea up the bank to the pond. She hated the pala-

'I don't remember. It was quite cheap.'

ver Hermione made, she wanted to drink tea, she wanted any-He looked at her, his face set.

thing but this fuss and business.

'I don't want to take it, Hermione,' he said.

At last they all mounted the grassy bank, to the picnic.

'Do let me give it to the rooms,' she said, going up to him Hermione poured out tea. She ignored now Ursula's pres-and putting her hand on his arm lightly, pleadingly. 'I shall ence. And Ursula, recovering from her ill-humour, turned to be so disappointed.'

Gerald saying:

'You know I don't want you to give me things,' he repeated

'Oh, I hated you so much the other day, Mr Crich,'

helplessly.

'What for?' said Gerald, wincing slightly away.

'I don't want to give you THINGS,' she said teasingly.

'For treating your horse so badly. Oh, I hated you so much!'

'But will you have this?'

'What did he do?' sang Hermione.

'All right,' he said, defeated, and she triumphed.

'He made his lovely sensitive Arab horse stand with him They went upstairs. There were two bedrooms to corre-at the railway-crossing whilst a horrible lot of trucks went by; spond with the rooms downstairs. One of them was half fur-and the poor thing, she was in a perfect frenzy, a perfect agony.

nished, and Birkin had evidently slept there. Hermione went It was the most horrible sight you can imagine.'

round the room carefully, taking in every detail, as if absorb-

'Why did you do it, Gerald?' asked Hermione, calm and

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interrogative.

ture as if it were ourselves. I do feel, that it is false to project

'She must learn to stand—what use is she to me in this our own feelings on every animate creature. It is a lack of country, if she shies and goes off every time an engine whistles.'

discrimination, a lack of criticism.'

'But why inflict unnecessary torture?' said Ursula. 'Why

'Quite,' said Birkin sharply. 'Nothing is so detestable as make her stand all that time at the crossing? You might just the maudlin attributing of human feelings and consciousness as well have ridden back up the road, and saved all that horror.

to animals.'

Her sides were bleeding where you had spurred her. It was

'Yes,' said Hermione, wearily, 'we must really take a posi-too horrible—!'

tion. Either we are going to use the animals, or they will use Gerald stiffened.

us.'

'I have to use her,' he replied. 'And if I'm going to be sure

'That's a fact,' said Gerald. 'A horse has got a will like a of her at ALL, she'll have to learn to stand noises.'

man, though it has no MIND strictly. And if your will isn't

'Why should she?' cried Ursula in a passion. 'She is a liv-master, then the horse is master of you. And this is a thing I ing creature, why should she stand anything, just because you can't help. I can't help being master of the horse.'

choose to make her? She has as much right to her own being,

'If only we could learn how to use our will,' said Hermione, as you have to yours.'

'we could do anything. The will can cure anything, and put

'There I disagree,' said Gerald. 'I consider that mare is anything right. That I am convinced of—if only we use the there for my use. Not because I bought her, but because that will properly, intelligibly.'

is the natural order. It is more natural for a man to take a

'What do you mean by using the will properly?' said horse and use it as he likes, than for him to go down on his Birkin.

knees to it, begging it to do as it wishes, and to fulfil its own

'A very great doctor taught me,' she said, addressing Ursula marvellous nature.'

and Gerald vaguely. 'He told me for instance, that to cure Ursula was just breaking out, when Hermione lifted her oneself of a bad habit, one should FORCE oneself to do it, face and began, in her musing sing-song:

when one would not do it—make oneself do it—and then the

'I do think—I do really think we must have the COUR-habit would disappear.'

AGE to use the lower animal life for our needs. I do think

'How do you mean?' said Gerald.

there is something wrong, when we look on every living crea-

'If you bite your nails, for example. Then, when you don't

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want to bite your nails, bite them, make yourself bite them.

would never, never dare to break her will, and let loose the And you would find the habit was broken.'

maelstrom of her subconsciousness, and see her in her ulti-

'Is that so?' said Gerald.

mate madness. Yet he was always striking at her.

'Yes. And in so many things, I have MADE myself well. I

'And of course,' he said to Gerald, 'horses HAVEN'T got was a very queer and nervous girl. And by learning to use my a complete will, like human beings. A horse has no ONE will.

will, simply by using my will, I MADE myself right.'

Every horse, strictly, has two wills. With one will, it wants to Ursula looked all the white at Hermione, as she spoke in put itself in the human power completely—and with the other, her slow, dispassionate, and yet strangely tense voice. A curi-it wants to be free, wild. The two wills sometimes lock—you ous thrill went over the younger woman. Some strange, dark, know that, if ever you've felt a horse bolt, while you've been convulsive power was in Hermione, fascinating and repelling.

driving it.'

'It is fatal to use the will like that,' cried Birkin harshly,

'I have felt a horse bolt while I was driving it,' said Gerald,

'disgusting. Such a will is an obscenity.'

'but it didn't make me know it had two wills. I only knew it Hermione looked at him for a long time, with her shad-was frightened.'

owed, heavy eyes. Her face was soft and pale and thin, almost Hermione had ceased to listen. She simply became oblivi-phosphorescent, her jaw was lean.

ous when these subjects were started.

'I'm sure it isn't,' she said at length. There always seemed

'Why should a horse want to put itself in the human an interval, a strange split between what she seemed to feel power?' asked Ursula. 'That is quite incomprehensible to me.

and experience, and what she actually said and thought. She I don't believe it ever wanted it.'

seemed to catch her thoughts at length from off the surface

'Yes it did. It's the last, perhaps highest, love-impulse: re-of a maelstrom of chaotic black emotions and reactions, and sign your will to the higher being,' said Birkin.

Birkin was always filled with repulsion, she caught so infalli-

'What curious notions you have of love,' jeered Ursula.

bly, her will never failed her. Her voice was always dispassion-

'And woman is the same as horses: two wills act in opposi-ate and tense, and perfectly confident. Yet she shuddered with tion inside her. With one will, she wants to subject herself a sense of nausea, a sort of seasickness that always threatened utterly. With the other she wants to bolt, and pitch her rider to overwhelm her mind. But her mind remained unbroken, to perdition.'

her will was still perfect. It almost sent Birkin mad. But he

'Then I'm a bolter,' said Ursula, with a burst of laughter.

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'It's a dangerous thing to domesticate even horses, let alone

'I really do not want to be forced into all this criticism and women,' said Birkin. 'The dominant principle has some rare analysis of life. I really DO want to see things in their en-antagonists.'

tirety, with their beauty left to them, and their wholeness,

'Good thing too,' said Ursula.

their natural holiness. Don't you feel it, don't you feel you

'Quite,' said Gerald, with a faint smile. 'There's more fun.'

CAN'T be tortured into any more knowledge?' said Hermione, Hermione could bear no more. She rose, saying in her easy stopping in front of Ursula, and turning to her with clenched sing-song:

fists thrust downwards.

'Isn't the evening beautiful! I get filled sometimes with

'Yes,' said Ursula. 'I do. I am sick of all this poking and such a great sense of beauty, that I feel I can hardly bear it.'

prying.'

Ursula, to whom she had appealed, rose with her, moved

'I'm so glad you are. Sometimes,' said Hermione, again to the last impersonal depths. And Birkin seemed to her al-stopping arrested in her progress and turning to Ursula, 'some-most a monster of hateful arrogance. She went with Hermione times I wonder if I OUGHT to submit to all this realisation, along the bank of the pond, talking of beautiful, soothing if I am not being weak in rejecting it. But I feel I CAN'T— things, picking the gentle cowslips.

I CAN'T. It seems to destroy EVERYTHING. All the beauty

'Wouldn't you like a dress,' said Ursula to Hermione, 'of and the—and the true holiness is destroyed—and I feel I this yellow spotted with orange—a cotton dress?'

can't live without them.'

'Yes,' said Hermione, stopping and looking at the flower,

'And it would be simply wrong to live without them,' cried letting the thought come home to her and soothe her.

Ursula. 'No, it is so IRREVERENT to think that everything

'Wouldn't it be pretty? I should LOVE it.'

must be realised in the head. Really, something must be left And she turned smiling to Ursula, in a feeling of real af-to the Lord, there always is and always will be.'

fection.

'Yes,' said Hermione, reassured like a child, 'it should, But Gerald remained

with Birkin, wanting to probe him shouldn't it? And Rupert—' she lifted her face to the sky, in a to the bottom, to know what he meant by the dual will in muse—'he CAN only tear things to pieces. He really IS like horses. A flicker of excitement danced on Gerald's face.

a boy who must pull everything to pieces to see how it is Hermione and Ursula strayed on together, united in a sud-made. And I can't think it is right —it does seem so irreverent, den bond of deep affection and closeness.

as you say.'

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'Like tearing open a bud to see what the flower will be Hermione.

like,' said Ursula.

'If you like.'

'Yes. And that kills everything, doesn't it? It doesn't allow He rose to go indoors. Ursula said she would take her leave.

any possibility of flowering.'

'Only,' she said, turning to Gerald, 'I must say that, how-

'Of course not,' said Ursula. 'It is purely destructive.'

ever man is lord of the beast and the fowl, I still don't think

'It is, isn't it!'

he has any right to violate the feelings of the inferior creation.

Hermione looked long and slow at Ursula, seeming to ac-I still think it would have been much more sensible and nice cept confirmation from her. Then the two women were silent.

of you if you'd trotted back up the road while the train went As soon as they were in accord, they began mutually to mis-by, and been considerate.'

trust each other. In spite of herself, Ursula felt herself recoil-

'I see,' said Gerald, smiling, but somewhat annoyed. 'I must ing from Hermione. It was all she could do to restrain her remember another time.'

revulsion.

'They all think I'm an interfering female,' thought Ursula They returned to the men, like two conspirators who have to herself, as she went away. But she was in arms against them.

withdrawn to come to an agreement. Birkin looked up at them.

She ran home plunged in thought. She had been very much Ursula hated him for his cold watchfulness. But he said noth-moved by Hermione, she had really come into contact with ing.

her, so that there was a sort of league between the two women.

'Shall we be going?' said Hermione. 'Rupert, you are com-And yet she could not bear her. But she put the thought ing to Shortlands to dinner? Will you come at once, will you away. 'She's really good,' she said to herself. 'She really wants come now, with us?'

what is right.' And she tried to feel at one with Hermione,

'I'm not dressed,' replied Birkin. 'And you know Gerald and to shut off from Birkin. She was strictly hostile to him.

stickles for convention.'

But she was held to him by some bond, some deep principle.

'I don't stickle for it,' said Gerald. 'But if you'd got as sick This at once irritated her and saved her.

as I have of rowdy go-as-you-please in the house, you'd prefer Only now and again, violent little shudders would come it if people were peaceful and conventional, at least at meals.'

over her, out of her subconsciousness, and she knew it was the

'All right,' said Birkin.

fact that she had stated her challenge to Birkin, and he had,

'But can't we wait for you while you dress?' persisted consciously or unconsciously, accepted. It was a fight to the

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death between them—or to new life: though in what the conflict lay, no one could say.

Chapter 13.

Mino.

The days went by, and she received no sign. Was he going to ignore her, was he going to take no further notice of her secret? A dreary weight of anxiety and acrid bitterness settled on her. And yet Ursula knew she was only deceiving herself, and that he would proceed. She said no word to anybody.

Then, sure enough, there came a note from him, asking if she would come to tea with Gudrun, to his rooms in town.

'Why does he ask Gudrun as well?' she asked herself at once. 'Does he want to protect himself, or does he think I would not go alone?' She was tormented by the thought that he wanted to protect himself. But at the end of all, she only said to herself: 'I don't want Gudrun to be there, because I want him to

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say something more to me. So I shan't tell Gudrun anything tree, with dangling scarlet and purple flowers.

about it, and I shall go alone. Then I shall know.'

'How nice the fuchsias are!' she said, to break the silence.

She found herself sitting on the tramcar, mounting up

'Aren't they! Did you think I had forgotten what I said?'

the hill going out of the town, to the place where he had his A swoon went over Ursula's mind.

lodging. She seemed to have passed into a kind of dream world,

'I don't want you to remember it—if you don't want to,'

absolved from the conditions of actuality. She watched the she struggled to say, through the dark mist that covered her.

sordid streets of the town go by beneath her, as if she were a There was silence for some moments.

spirit disconnected from the material universe. What had it

'No,' he said. 'It isn't that. Only—if we are going to know all to do with her? She was palpitating and formless within each other, we must pledge ourselves for ever. If we are going the flux of the ghost life. She could not consider any more, to make a relationship, even of friendship, there must be somewhat anybody would say of her or think about her. People thing final and infallible about it.'

had passed out of her range, she was absolved. She had fallen There was a clang of mistrust and almost anger in his voice.

strange and dim, out of the sheath of the material life, as a She did not answer. Her heart was too much contracted. She berry falls from the only world it has ever known, down out could not have spoken.

of the sheath on to the real unknown.

Seeing she was not going to reply, he continued, almost Birkin was standing in the middle of the room, when she bitterly, giving himself away:

was shown in by the landlady. He too was moved outside

'I can't say it is love I have to offer—and it isn't love I himself. She saw him agitated and shaken, a frail, unsubstan-want. It is something much more impersonal and harder—

tial body silent like the node of some violent force, that came and rarer.'

out from him and shook her almost into a swoon.

There was a silence, out of which she said:

'You are alone?' he said.

'You mean you don't love me?'

'Yes—Gudrun could not come.'

She suffered furiously, saying that.

He instantly guessed why.

'Yes, if you like to put it like that. Though perhaps that And they were both seated in silence, in the terrible ten-isn't true. I don't know. At any rate, I don't feel the emotion of sion of the room. She was aware that it was a pleasant room, love for you—no, and I don't want to. Because it gives out in full of light and very restful in its form—aware also of a fuchsia the last issues.'

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'Love gives out in the last issues?' she asked, feeling numb voice:

to the lips.

'Then let me go home—what am I doing here?'

'Yes, it does. At the very last, one is alone, beyond the

'There is the door,' he said. 'You are a free agent.'

influence of love. There is a real impersonal me, that is be-He was suspended finely and perfectly in this extremity.

yond love, beyond any emotional relationship. So it is with She hung motionless for some seconds, then she sat down you. But we want to delude ourselves that love is the root. It again.

isn't. It is only the branches. The root is beyond love, a naked

'If there is no love, what is there?' she cried, almost jeering.

kind of isolation, an isolated me, that does NOT meet and

'Something,' he said, looking at her, battling with his soul, mingle, and never can.'

with all his might.

She watched him with wide, troubled eyes. His face was

'What?'

incandescent in its abstract earnestness.

He was silent for a long time, unable to be in communica-

'And you mean you can't love?' she asked, in trepidation.

tion with her while she was in this state of opposition.

'Yes, if you like. I have loved. But there is a beyond, where

'There is,' he said, in a voice of pure abstraction; 'a final there is not love.'

me which is stark and impersonal and beyond responsibility.

She could not submit to this. She felt it swooning over So there is a final you. And it is there I would want to meet her. But she could not submit.

you—not in the emotional, loving plane—but there beyond,

'But how do you know—if you have never REALLY loved?'

where there is no speech and no terms of agreement. There she asked.

we are two stark, unknown beings, two utterly strange crea-

'It is true, what I say; there is a beyond, in you, in me, tures, I would want to approach you, and you me. And there which is further than love, beyond the scope, as stars are be-could be no obligation, because there is no standard for ac-yond the scope of vision, some of them.'

tion there, because no understanding has been reaped from

'Then there is no love,' cried Ursula.

that plane. It is quite inhuman,—so there can be no calling

'Ultimately, no, there is something else. But, ultimately, to book, in any form whatsoever—because one is outside the there IS no love.'

pale of all that is accepted, and nothing known applies. One Ursula was given over to this statement for some moments.

can only follow the impulse, taking that which lies in front, Then she half rose from her chair, saying, in a final, repellent and responsible for nothing, asked for nothing, giving noth-

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ing, only each taking according to the primal desire.'

He looked at her, to see if he felt that she was goodlook-Ursula listened to this speech, her mind dumb and almost ing.

senseless, what he said was so unexpected and so untoward.

'I don't FEEL that you're goodlooking,' he said.

'It is just purely selfish,' she said.

'Not even attractive?' she mocked, bitingly.

'If it is pure, yes. But it isn't selfish at all. Because I don't He knitted his brows in sudden exasperation.

KNOW what I want of you. I deliver MYSELF over to the

'Don't you see that it's not a question of visual apprecia-unknown, in coming to you, I am without reserves or de-tion in the least,' he cried. 'I don't WANT to see you. I've fences, stripped entirely, into the unknown. Only there needs seen plenty of women, I'm sick and weary of seeing them. I the pledge between us, that we will both cast off everything, want a woman I don't see.'

cast off ourselves even, and cease to be, so that that which is

'I'm sorry I can't oblige you by being invisible,' she laughed.

perfectly ourselves can take place in us.'

'Yes,' he said, 'you are invisible to me, if you don't force me She pondered along her own line of thought.

to be visually aware of you. But I don't want to see you or hear

'But it is because you love me, that you want me?' she you.'

persisted.

'What did you ask me to tea for, then?' she mocked.

'No it isn't. It is because I believe in you—if I DO believe But he would take no notice of her. He was talking to in you.'

himself.

'Aren't you sure?' she laughed, suddenly hurt.

'I want to find you, where you don't know your own exist-He was looking at her steadfastly, scarcely heeding what ence, the you that your common self denies utterly. But I she said.

don't want your good looks, and I don't want your womanly

'Yes, I must believe in you, or else I shouldn't be here say-feelings, and I don't want your thoughts nor opinions nor ing this,' he replied. 'But that is all the proof I have. I don't your ideas—they are all bagatelles to me.'

feel any very strong belief at this particular moment.'

'You are very conceited, Monsieur,' she mocked. 'How do She disliked him for this sudden relapse into weariness you know what my womanly feelings are, or my thoughts or and faithlessness.

my ideas? You don't even know what I think of you now.'

'But don't you think me goodlooking?' she persisted, in a

'Nor do I care in the slightest.'

mocking voice.

'I think you are very silly. I think you want to tell me you

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love me, and you go all this way round to do it.'

and kingly. And then, like a dart, it had shot out of the room,

'All right,' he said, looking up with sudden exasperation.

through the open window-doors, and into the garden.

'Now go away then, and leave me alone. I don't want any

'What's he after?' said Birkin, rising.

more of your meretricious persiflage.'

The young cat trotted lordly down the path, waving his

'Is it really persiflage?' she mocked, her face really relaxing tail. He was an ordinary tabby with white paws, a slender into laughter. She interpreted it, that he had made a deep young gentleman. A crouching, fluffy, brownish-grey cat was confession of love to her. But he was so absurd in his words, stealing up the side of the fence. The Mino walked statelily also.

up to her, with manly nonchalance. She crouched before him They were silent for many minutes, she was pleased and and pressed herself on the ground in humility, a fluffy soft elated like a child. His concentration broke, he began to look outcast, looking up at him with wild eyes that were green and at her simply and naturally.

lovely as great jewels. He looked casually down on her. So she

'What I want is a strange conjunction with you—' he said crept a few inches further, proceeding on her way to the back quietly; 'not meeting and mingling—you are quite right—

door, crouching in a wonderful, soft, self-obliterating man-but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings—as ner, and moving like a shadow.

the stars balance each other.'

He, going statelily on his slim legs, walked after her, then She looked at him. He was very earnest, and earnestness suddenly, for pure excess, he gave her a light cuff with his was always rather ridiculous, commonplace, to her. It made paw on the side of her face. She ran off a few steps, like a her feel unfree and uncomfortable. Yet she liked him so much.

blown leaf along the ground, then crouched unobtrusively, in But why drag in the stars.

submissive, wild patience. The Mino pretended to take no

'Isn't this rather sudden?' she mocked.

notice of her. He blinked his eyes superbly at the landscape.

He began to laugh.

In a minute she drew herself together and moved softly, a

'Best to read the terms of the contract, before we sign,' he fleecy brown-grey shadow, a few paces forward. She began to said.

quicken her pace, in a moment she would be gone like a dream, A young grey cat that had been sleeping on the sofa when the young grey lord sprang before her, and gave her a jumped down and stretched, rising on its long legs, and arch-light handsome cuff. She subsided at once, submissively.

ing its slim back. Then it sat considering for a moment, erect

'She is a wild cat,' said Birkin. 'She has come in from the

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woods.'

The young slim cat looked at him, and slowly narrowed The eyes of the stray cat flared round for a moment, like its eyes. Then it glanced away at the landscape, looking into great green fires staring at Birkin. Then she had rushed in a the distance as if completely oblivious of the two human be-soft swift rush, half way down the garden. There she paused ings.

to look round. The Mino turned his face in pure superiority

'Mino,' said Ursula, 'I don't like you. You are a bully like to his master, and slowly closed his eyes, standing in statu-all males.'

esque young perfection. The wild cat's round, green, wonder-

'No,' said Birkin, 'he is justified. He is not a bully. He is ing eyes were staring all the while like uncanny fires. Then only insisting to the poor stray that she shall acknowledge again, like a shadow, she slid towards the kitchen.

him as a sort of fate, her own fate: because you can see she is In a lovely springing leap, like a wind, the Mino was upon fluffy and promiscuous as the wind. I am with him entirely.

her, and had boxed her twice, very definitely, with a white, He wants superfine stability.'

delicate fist. She sank and slid back, unquestioning. He walked

'Yes, I know!' cried Ursula. 'He wants his own way—I know after her, and cuffed her once or twice, leisurely, with sudden what your fine words work down to—bossiness, I call it, bossi-little blows of his magic white paws.

ness.'

'Now why does he do that?' cried Ursula in indignation.

The young cat again glanced at Birkin in disdain of the

'They are on intimate terms,' said Birkin.

noisy woman.

'And is that why he hits her?'

'I quite agree with you, Miciotto,' said Birkin to the cat.

'Yes,' laughed Birkin, 'I think he wants to make it quite

'Keep your male dignity, and your higher understanding.'

obvious to her.'

Again the Mino narrowed his eyes as if he were looking at

'Isn't it horrid of him!' she cried; and going out into the sun. Then, suddenly affecting to have no connection at all garden she called to the Mino:

with the two people, he went trotting off, with assumed spon-

'Stop it, don't bully. Stop hitting her.'

taneity and gaiety, his tail erect, his white feet blithe.

The stray cat vanished like a swift, invisible shadow. The

'Now he will find the belle sauvage once more, and enter-Mino glanced at Ursula, then looked from her disdainfully to tain her with his superior wisdom,' laughed Birkin.

his master.

Ursula looked at the man who stood in the garden with

'Are you a bully, Mino?' Birkin asked.

his hair blowing and his eyes smiling ironically, and she cried:

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'Oh it makes me so cross, this assumption of male superi-tation and admiration and love. She was so quick, and so lamority! And it is such a lie! One wouldn't mind if there were bent, like discernible fire, and so vindictive, and so rich in her any justification for it.'

dangerous flamy sensitiveness.

'The wild cat,' said Birkin, 'doesn't mind. She perceives

'I've not said it at all,' he replied, 'if you will give me a that it is justified.'

chance to speak.'

'Does she!' cried Ursula. 'And tell it to the Horse Ma-

'No, no!' she cried. 'I won't let you speak. You've said it, a rines.'

satellite, you're not going to wriggle out of it. You've said it.'

'To them also.'

'You'll never believe now that I HAVEN'T said it,' he

'It is just like Gerald Crich with his horse—a lust for bul-answered. 'I neither implied nor indicated nor mentioned a lying—a real Wille zur Macht—so base, so petty.'

satellite, nor intended a satellite, never.'

'I agree that the Wille zur Macht is a base and petty thing.

'YOU PREVARICATOR!' she cried, in real indignation.

But with the Mino, it is the desire to bring this female cat

'Tea is ready, sir,' said the landlady from the doorway.

into a pure stable equilibrium, a transcendent and abiding They both looked at her, very much as the cats had looked RAPPORT with the single male. Whereas without him, as at them, a little while before.

you see, she is a mere stray, a fluffy sporadic bit of chaos. It is

'Thank you, Mrs Daykin.'

a volonte de pouvoir, if you like, a will to ability, taking pouvoir An interrupted silence fell over the two of them, a mo-as a verb.'

ment of breach.

'Ah—! Sophistries! It's the old Adam.'

'Come and have tea,' he said.

'Oh yes. Adam kept Eve in the indestructible paradise,

'Yes, I should love it,' she replied, gathering herself to-when he kept her single with himself, like a star in its orbit.'

gether.

'Yes—yes—' cried Ursula, pointing her finger at him.

They sat facing each other across the tea table.

'There you are—a star in its orbit! A satellite—a satellite of

'I did not say, nor imply, a satellite. I meant two single Mars—that's what she is to be! There—there—you've given equal stars balanced in conjunction __'.

yourself away! You want a satellite, Mars and his satellite!

'You gave yourself away, you gave away your little game You've said it—

you've said it—you've dished yourself!'

completely,' she cried, beginning at once to eat. He saw that He stood smiling in frustration and amusement and irri-she would take no further heed of his expostulation, so he

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began to pour the tea.

there ever was. Only nobody takes the trouble to be essential.'

'What GOOD things to eat!' she cried.

'How essential?' she said.

'Take your own sugar,' he said.

'I do think,' he said, 'that the world is only held together He handed her her cup. He had everything so nice, such by the mystic conjunction, the ultimate unison between pretty cups and plates, painted with mauve-lustre and green, people—a bond. And the immediate bond is between man also shapely bowls and glass plates, and old spoons, on a wo-and woman.'

ven cloth of pale grey and black and purple. It was very rich

'But it's such old hat,' said Ursula. 'Why should love be a and fine. But

Ursula could see Hermione's influence.

bond? No, I'm not having any.'

'Your things are so lovely!' she said, almost angrily.

'If you are walking westward,' he said, 'you forfeit the

'I like them. It gives me real pleasure to use things that are northern and eastward and southern direction. If you admit a attractive in themselves—pleasant things. And Mrs Daykin unison, you forfeit all the possibilities of chaos.'

is good. She thinks everything is wonderful, for my sake.'

'But love is freedom,' she declared.

'Really,' said Ursula, 'landladies are better than wives, nowa-

'Don't cant to me,' he replied. 'Love is a direction which days. They certainly CARE a great deal more. It is much excludes all other directions. It's a freedom TOGETHER, if more beautiful and complete here now, than if you were mar-you like.'

ried.'

'No,' she said, 'love includes everything.'

'But think of the emptiness within,' he laughed.

'Sentimental cant,' he replied. 'You want the state of chaos,

'No,' she said. 'I am jealous that men have such perfect that's all. It is ultimate nihilism, this freedom-in-love busi-landladies and such beautiful lodgings. There is nothing left ness, this freedom which is love and love which is freedom. As them to desire.'

a matter of fact, if you enter into a pure unison, it is irrevo-

'In the house-keeping way, we'll hope not. It is disgust-cable, and it is never pure till it is irrevocable. And when it is ing, people marrying for a home.'

irrevocable, it is one way, like the path of a star.'

'Still,' said Ursula, 'a man has very little need for a woman

'Ha!' she cried bitterly. 'It is the old dead morality.'

now, has he?'

'No,' he said, 'it is the law of creation. One is committed.

'In outer things, maybe—except to share his bed and bear One must commit oneself to a conjunction with the other—

his children. But essentially, there is just the same need as for ever. But it is not selfless—it is a maintaining of the self in

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mystic balance and integrity—like a star balanced with an-

'Are you sure?' she mocked wickedly, 'what my love is?'

other star.'

'Yes, I am,' he retorted.

'I don't trust you when you drag in the stars,' she said. 'If

'So cocksure!' she said. 'How can anybody ever be right, you were quite true, it wouldn't be necessary to be so far-who is so cocksure? It shows you are wrong.'

fetched.'

He was silent in chagrin.

'Don't trust me then,' he said, angry. 'It is enough that I They had talked and struggled till they were both wearied trust myself.'

out.

'And that is where you make another mistake,' she replied.

'Tell me about yourself and your people,' he said.

'You DON'T trust yourself. You don't fully believe yourself And she told him about the Brangwens, and about her what you are saying. You don't really want this conjunction, mother, and about Skrebensky, her first love, and about her otherwise you wouldn't talk so much about it, you'd get it.'

later experiences. He sat very still, watching her as she talked.

He was suspended for a moment, arrested.

And he seemed to listen with reverence. Her face was beauti-

'How?' he said.

ful and full of baffled light as she told him all the things that

'By just loving,' she retorted in defiance.

had hurt her or perplexed her so deeply. He seemed to warm He was still a

moment, in anger. Then he said: and comfort his soul at the beautiful light of her nature.

'I tell you, I don't believe in love like that. I tell you, you

'If she REALLY could pledge herself,' he thought to him-want love to administer to your egoism, to subserve you. Love self, with passionate insistence but hardly any hope. Yet a is a process of subservience with you—and with everybody. I curious little irresponsible laughter appeared in his heart.

hate it.'

'We have all suffered so much,' he mocked, ironically.

'No,' she cried, pressing back her head like a cobra, her She looked up at him, and a flash of wild gaiety went over eyes flashing. 'It is a process of pride—I want to be proud—

her face, a strange flash of yellow light coming from her eyes.

,

'Haven't we!' she cried, in a high, reckless cry. 'It is almost

'Proud and subservient, proud and subservient, I know absurd, isn't it?'

you,' he retorted dryly. 'Proud and subservient, then subser-

'Quite absurd,' he said. 'Suffering bores me, any more.'

vient to the proud—I know you and your love. It is a tick-

'So it does me.'

tack, tick-tack, a dance of opposites.'

He was almost afraid of the mocking recklessness of her

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splendid face. Here was one who would go to the whole lengths of heaven or hell, whichever she had to go. And he mistrusted her, he was afraid of a woman capable of such abandon, such dangerous thoroughness of destructivity. Yet he chuckled within himself also.

She came over to him and put her hand on his shoulder, looking down at him with strange golden-lighted eyes, very tender, but with a curious devilish look lurking underneath.

'Say you love me, say "my love" to me,' she pleaded He looked back into her eyes, and saw. His face flickered with sardonic comprehension.

Chapter 14.

'I love you right enough,' he said, grimly. 'But I want it to *Water-party*.

be something else.'

'But why?' she insisted, bending her wonderful Every year Mr Crich gave a more or less public water-luminous face to him. 'Why isn't it enough?'

party on the lake. There was a little pleasure-launch on Willey

'Because we can go one better,' he said, putting his arms Water and several rowing boats, and guests could take tea round her.

either in the marquee that was set up in the grounds of the

'No, we can't,' she said, in a strong, voluptuous voice of house, or they could picnic in the shade of the great walnut yielding. 'We can only love each other. Say "my love" to me, tree at the boat-house by the lake. This year the staff of the say it, say it.'

Grammar-School was invited, along with the chief officials She put her arms round his neck. He enfolded her, and of the firm. Gerald and the younger Criches did not care for kissed her subtly, murmuring in a subtle voice of love, and this party, but it had become customary now, and it pleased irony, and submission: the father, as being the only occasion when he could gather

'Yes,—my love, yes,—my love. Let love be enough then. I some people of the district together in festivity with him. For love you then—I love you. I'm bored by the rest.'

he loved to give pleasures to his dependents and to those poorer

'Yes,' she murmured, nestling very sweet and close to him.

than himself. But his children preferred the company of their

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own equals in wealth. They hated their inferiors' humility or giggled after her, she made a point of saying loudly, to Ursula: gratitude or awkwardness.

'Regarde, regarde ces gens-la! Ne sont-ils pas des hiboux Nevertheless they were willing to attend at this festival, as incroyables?' And with the words of French in her mouth, they had done almost since they were children, the more so, she would look over her shoulder at the giggling party.

as they all felt a little guilty now, and unwilling to thwart

'No, really, it's impossible!' Ursula would reply distinctly.

their father any more, since he was so ill in health. Therefore, And so the two girls took it out of their universal enemy. But quite cheerfully Laura prepared to take her mother's place as their father became more and more enraged.

hostess, and Gerald assumed responsibility for the amuse-Ursula was all snowy white, save that her hat was pink, ments on the water.

and entirely without trimming, and her shoes were dark red, Birkin had written to Ursula saying he expected to see her and she carried an orange-coloured coat. And in this guise at the party, and Gudrun, although she scorned the patron-they were walking all the way to Shortlands, their father and age of the Criches, would nevertheless accompany her mother mother going in front.

and father if the weather were fine.

They were laughing at their mother, who, dressed in a sum-The day came blue and full of sunshine, with little wafts mer material of black and purple stripes, and wearing a hat of of wind. The sisters both wore dresses of white crepe, and purple straw, was setting forth with much more of the shy-hats of soft grass. But Gudrun had a sash of brilliant black ness and trepidation of a young girl than her daughters ever and pink and yellow colour wound broadly round her waist, felt, walking demurely beside her husband, who, as usual, and she had pink silk stockings, and black and pink and yel-looked

rather crumpled in his best suit, as if he were the fa-low decoration on the brim of her hat, weighing it down a ther of a young family and had been holding the baby whilst little. She carried also a yellow silk coat over her arm, so that his wife got dressed.

she looked remarkable, like a painting from the Salon. Her

'Look at the young couple in front,' said Gudrun calmly.

appearance was a sore trial to her father, who said angrily: Ursula looked at her mother and father, and was suddenly

'Don't you think you might as well get yourself up for a seized with uncontrollable laughter. The two girls stood in Christmas cracker, an'ha' done with it?'

the road and laughed till the tears ran down their faces, as But Gudrun looked handsome and brilliant, and she wore they caught sight again of the shy, unworldly couple of their her clothes in pure defiance. When people stared at her, and parents going on ahead.

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'We are roaring at you, mother,' called Ursula, helplessly

'I'll see if I'm going to be followed by a pair of giggling following after her

parents.

yelling jackanapes—' he cried vengefully.

Mrs Brangwen turned round with a slightly puzzled, ex-The girls stood still, laughing helplessly at his fury, upon asperated look. 'Oh indeed!' she said. 'What is there so very the path beside the hedge.

funny about ME, I should like to know?'

'Why you're as silly as they are, to take any notice,' said She could not understand that there could be anything Mrs Brangwen also becoming angry now he was really en-amiss with her appearance. She had a perfect calm sufficiency, raged.

an easy indifference to any criticism whatsoever, as if she were

'There are some people coming, father,' cried Ursula, with beyond it. Her clothes were always rather odd, and as a rule mocking warning. He glanced round quickly, and went on to slip-shod, yet she wore them with a perfect ease and satisfac-join his wife, walking stiff with rage. And the girls followed, tion. Whatever she had on, so long as she was barely tidy, she weak with laughter.

was right, beyond remark; such an aristocrat she was by in-When the people had passed by, Brangwen cried in a loud, stinct.

stupid voice:

'You look so stately, like a country Baroness,' said Ursula,

'I'm going back home if there's any more of this. I'm damned laughing with a little tenderness at her mother's naive puzzled if I'm going to be made a fool of in this fashion, in the public air.

road.'

'JUST like a country Baroness!' chimed in Gudrun. Now He was really out of temper. At the sound of his blind, the mother's natural hauteur became

selfconscious, and the vindictive voice, the laughter suddenly left the girls, and their girls shrieked again.

hearts contracted with contempt. They hated his words 'in

'Go home, you pair of idiots, great giggling idiots!' cried the public road.' What did they care for the public road? But the father inflamed with irritation.

Gudrun was conciliatory.

'Mm-m-er!' booed Ursula, pulling a face at his crossness.

'But we weren't laughing to HURT you,' she cried, with The yellow lights danced in his eyes, he leaned forward in an uncouth gentleness which made her parents uncomfort-real rage.

able. 'We were laughing because we're fond of you.'

'Don't be so silly as to take any notice of the great gabies,'

'We'll walk on in front, if they are SO touchy,' said Ursula, said Mrs Brangwen, turning on her way.

angry. And in this wise they arrived at Willey Water. The

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lake was blue and fair, the meadows sloped down in sunshine

'Policemen to keep you in, too!' said Gudrun. 'My word, on one side, the thick dark woods dropped steeply on the this is a beautiful affair.'

other. The little pleasure-launch was fussing out from the

'We'd better look after father and mother,' said Ursula shore, twanging its music, crowded with people, flapping its anxiously.

paddles. Near the boat-house was a throng of gaily-dressed

'Mother's PERFECTLY capable of getting through this persons, small in the distance. And on the highroad, some of little celebration,' said Gudrun with some contempt.

the common people were standing along the hedge, looking But Ursula knew that her father felt uncouth and angry at the festivity beyond, enviously, like souls not admitted to and unhappy, so she was far from her ease. They waited out-paradise.

side the gate till their parents came up. The tall, thin man in

'My eye!' said Gudrun, sotto voce, looking at the motley his crumpled clothes was unnerved and irritable as a boy, find-of guests, 'there's a pretty crowd if you like! Imagine yourself ing himself on the brink of this social function. He did not in the midst of that, my dear.'

feel a gentleman, he did not feel anything except pure exas-Gudrun's apprehensive horror of people in the mass un-peration.

nerved Ursula. 'It looks rather awful,' she said anxiously.

Ursula took her place at his side, they gave their tickets to

'And imagine what they'll be like—IMAGINE!' said the policeman, and passed in on to the grass, four abreast; the Gudrun, still in that unnerving, subdued voice. Yet she ad-tall, hot, ruddy-dark man with his narrow boyish

brow drawn vanced determinedly.

with irritation, the fresh-faced, easy woman, perfectly col-

'I suppose we can get away from them,' said Ursula anx-lected though her hair was slipping on one side, then Gudrun, iously.

her eyes round and dark and staring, her full soft face impas-

'We're in a pretty fix if we can't,' said Gudrun. Her ex-sive, almost sulky, so that she seemed to be backing away in treme ironic loathing and apprehension was very trying to antagonism even whilst she was advancing; and then Ursula, Ursula.

with the odd, brilliant, dazzled look on her face, that always

'We needn't stay,' she said.

came when she was in some false situation.

'I certainly shan't stay five minutes among that little lot,'

Birkin was the good angel. He came smiling to them with said Gudrun. They advanced nearer, till they saw policemen his affected social grace, that somehow was never QUITE

at the gates.

right. But he took off his hat and smiled at them with a real

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smile in his eyes, so that Brangwen cried out heartily in relief: broidered flowers, and balancing an enormous plain hat on

'How do you do? You're better, are you?'

her head. She looked striking, astonishing, almost macabre, so

'Yes, I'm better. How do you do, Mrs Brangwen? I know tall, with the fringe of her great cream-coloured vividly-Gudrun and Ursula very well.'

blotched shawl trailing on the ground after her, her thick hair His eyes smiled full of natural warmth. He had a soft, coming low over her eyes, her face strange and long and pale, flattering manner with women, particularly with women who and the blotches of brilliant colour drawn round her.

were not young.

'Doesn't she look WEIRD!' Gudrun heard some girls tit-

'Yes,' said Mrs Brangwen, cool but yet gratified. 'I have ter behind her. And she could have killed them.

heard them speak of you often enough.'

'How do you do!' sang Hermione, coming up very kindly, He laughed. Gudrun looked aside, feeling she was being and glancing slowly over Gudrun's father and mother. It was belittled. People were standing about in groups, some women a trying moment, exasperating for Gudrun. Hermione was were sitting in the shade of the walnut tree, with cups of tea really so strongly entrenched in her class superiority, she could in their hands, a waiter in evening dress was hurrying round, come up and know people out of simple curiosity, as if they some girls were simpering with parasols, some young men, were creatures on exhibition. Gudrun would do the same her-who had just come in from rowing, were sitting cross-legged self. But she resented

being in the position when somebody on the grass, coatless, their shirtsleeves rolled up in manly might do it to her.

fashion, their hands resting on their white flannel trousers, Hermione, very remarkable, and distinguishing the their gaudy ties floating about, as they laughed and tried to Brangwens very much, led them along to where Laura Crich be witty with the young damsels.

stood receiving the guests.

'Why,' thought Gudrun churlishly, 'don't they have the

'This is Mrs Brangwen,' sang Hermione, and Laura, who manners to put their coats on, and not to assume such inti-wore a stiff embroidered linen dress, shook hands and said macy in their appearance.'

she was glad to see her. Then Gerald came up, dressed in She abhorred the ordinary young man, with his hair plas-white, with a black and brown blazer, and looking handsome.

tered back, and his easy-going chumminess.

He too was introduced to the Brangwen parents, and imme-Hermione Roddice came up, in a handsome gown of white diately he spoke to Mrs Brangwen as if she were a lady, and to lace, trailing an enormous silk shawl blotched with great em-Brangwen as if he were NOT a gentleman. Gerlad was so **Contents**



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obvious in his demeanour. He had to shake hands with his

'No thanks,' said Gudrun coldly.

left hand, because he had hurt his right, and carried it, ban-

'You don't care for the water?'

daged up, in the pocket of his jacket. Gudrun was VERY

'For the water? Yes, I like it very much.'

thankful that none of her party asked him what was the matHe looked at her, his eyes searching.

ter with the hand.

'You don't care for going on a launch, then?'

The steam launch was fussing in, all its music jingling, She was slow in answering, and then she spoke slowly.

people calling excitedly from on board. Gerald went to see to

'No,' she said. 'I can't say that I do.' Her colour was high, the debarkation, Birkin was getting tea for Mrs Brangwen, she seemed angry about something.

Brangwen had joined a Grammar-School group, Hermione

'Un peu trop de monde,' said Ursula, explaining.

was sitting down by their mother, the girls went to the land-

'Eh? TROP DE MONDE!' He laughed shortly. 'Yes ing-stage to watch the launch come in.

there's a fair number of 'em.'

She hooted and tooted gaily, then her paddles were silent, Gudrun turned on him brilliantly.

the ropes were thrown ashore, she drifted in with a little bump.

'Have you ever been from Westminster Bridge to Rich-Immediately the passengers crowded excitedly to come ashore.

mond on one of the Thames steamers?' she cried.

'Wait a minute, wait a minute,' shouted Gerald in sharp

'No,' he said, 'I can't say I have.'

command.

'Well, it's one of the most VILE experiences I've ever had.'

They must wait till the boat was tight on the ropes, till She spoke rapidly and excitedly, the colour high in her cheeks.

the small gangway was put out. Then they streamed ashore,

'There was absolutely nowhere to sit down, nowhere, a man clamouring as if they had come from America.

just above sang "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep" the

'Oh it's SO nice!' the young girls were crying. 'It's quite WHOLE way; he was blind and he had a small organ, one of lovely.'

those portable organs, and he expected money; so you can The waiters from on board ran out to the boat-house with imagine what THAT was like; there came a constant smell of baskets, the captain lounged on the little bridge. Seeing all luncheon from below, and puffs of hot oily machinery; the safe, Gerald came to Gudrun and Ursula.

journey took hours and hours; and for miles, liter-

'You wouldn't care to go on board for the next trip, and ally for miles, dreadful boys ran with us on the shore, in that have tea there?' he asked.

AWFUL Thames mud, going in UP TO THE WAIST—

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they had their trousers turned back, and they went up to their Gerald laughed.

hips in that indescribable Thames mud, their faces always

'Never mind,' he said. 'You shan't go on the launch.'

turned to us, and screaming, exactly like carrion creatures, Gudrun flushed quickly at his rebuke.

screaming "Ere y'are sir, 'ere y'are sir, 'ere y'are sir," exactly There were a few moments of silence. Gerald, like a senti-like some foul carrion objects, perfectly obscene; and paterfa-nel, was watching the people who were going on to the boat.

milias on board, laughing when the boys went right down in He was very goodlooking and self-contained, but his air of that awful mud, occasionally throwing them a ha'penny. And soldierly alertness was rather irritating.

if you'd seen the intent look on the faces of these boys, and

'Will you have tea here then, or go across to the house, the way they darted in the filth when a coin was flung—

where there's a tent on the lawn?' he asked.

really, no vulture or jackal could dream of approaching them,

'Can't we have a rowing boat, and get out?' asked Ursula, for foulness. I NEVER would go on a pleasure boat again—

who was always rushing in too fast.

never.'

'To get out?' smiled Gerald.

Gerald watched her all the time she spoke, his eyes glitter-

'You see,' cried Gudrun, flushing at Ursula's outspoken ing with faint rousedness. It was not so much what she said; rudeness, 'we don't know the people, we are almost COMit was she herself who roused him, roused him with a small, PLETE strangers here.'

vivid pricking.

'Oh, I can soon set you up with a few acquaintances,' he

'Of course,' he said, 'every civilised body is bound to have said easily.

its vermin.'

Gudrun looked at him, to see if it were ill-meant. Then

'Why?' cried Ursula. 'I don't have vermin.'

she smiled at him.

'And it's not that—it's the QUALITY of the whole thing—

'Ah,' she said, 'you know what we mean. Can't we go up paterfamilias laughing and thinking it sport, and throwing there, and explore that coast?' She pointed to a grove on the the ha'pennies, and materfamilias spreading her fat little knees hillock of the meadow-side, near the shore half way down the and eating, continually eating—' replied Gudrun.

lake. 'That looks perfectly lovely. We might even bathe. Isn't

'Yes,' said Ursula. 'It isn't the boys so much who are ver-it beautiful in this light. Really, it's like one of the reaches of min; it's the people themselves, the whole body politic, as you the Nile—as one imagines the Nile.'

call it.'

Gerald smiled at her factitious enthusiasm for the distant

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spot.

'How fearfully good! How frightfully nice if you could!'

'You're sure it's far enough off?' he asked ironically, adding cried Gudrun warmly, her colour flushing up again. It made at once: 'Yes, you might go there, if we could get a boat. They the blood stir in his veins, the subtle way she turned to him seem to be all out.'

and infused her gratitude into his body.

He looked round the lake and counted the rowing boats

'Where's Birkin?' he said, his eyes twinkling. 'He might on its surface.

help me to get it down.'

'How lovely it would be!' cried Ursula wistfully.

'But what about your hand? Isn't it hurt?' asked Gudrun,

'And don't you want tea?' he said.

rather muted, as if avoiding the intimacy. This was the first

'Oh,' said Gudrun, 'we could just drink a cup, and be off.'

time the hurt had been mentioned. The curious way she skirted He looked from one to the other, smiling. He was some-round the subject sent a new, subtle caress through his veins.

what offended—yet sporting.

He took his hand out of his pocket. It was bandaged. He

'Can you manage a boat pretty well?' he asked.

looked at it, then put it in his pocket again. Gudrun quivered

'Yes,' replied Gudrun, coldly, 'pretty well.'

at the sight of the wrapped up paw.

'Oh yes,' cried Ursula. 'We can both of us row like water-

'Oh I can manage with one hand. The canoe is as light as spiders.'

a feather,' he said. 'There's Rupert!—Rupert!'

'You can? There's light little canoe of mine, that I didn't Birkin turned from his social duties and came towards take out for fear somebody should drown themselves. Do you them.

think you'd be safe in that?'

'What have you done to it?' asked Ursula, who had been

'Oh perfectly,' said Gudrun.

aching to put the question for the last half hour.

'What an angel!' cried Ursula.

'To my hand?' said Gerald. 'I trapped it in some machin-

'Don't, for MY sake, have an accident—because I'm re-ery.'

sponsible for the water.'

'Ugh!' said Ursula. 'And did it hurt much?'

'Sure,' pledged Gudrun.

'Yes,' he said. 'It did at the time. It's getting better now. It

'Besides, we can both swim quite well,' said Ursula.

crushed the fingers.'

'Well—then I'll get them to put you up a tea-basket, and

'Oh,' cried Ursula, as if in pain, 'I hate people who hurt you can picnic all to yourselves,—that's the idea, isn't it?'

themselves. I can FEEL it.' And she shook her hand.

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'What do you want?' said Birkin.

bathers whose striped tents stood between the willows of the The two men carried down the slim brown boat, and set it meadow's edge, and drew along the open shore, past the mead-on the water.

ows that sloped golden in the light of the already late after-

'You're quite sure you'll be safe in it?' Gerald asked.

noon. Other boats were stealing under the wooded shore op-

'Quite sure,' said Gudrun. 'I wouldn't be so mean as to posite, they could hear people's laughter and voices. But take it, if there was the slightest doubt. But I've had a canoe Gudrun rowed on towards the clump of trees that balanced at Arundel, and I assure you I'm perfectly safe.'

perfect in the distance, in the golden light.

So saying, having given her word like a man, she and Ursula The sisters found a little place where a tiny stream flowed entered the frail craft, and pushed gently off. The two men into the lake, with reeds and flowery marsh of pink willow stood watching them. Gudrun was paddling. She knew the herb, and a gravelly bank to the side. Here they ran delicately men were watching her, and it made her slow and rather clumsy.

ashore, with their frail boat, the two girls took off their shoes The colour flew in her face like a flag.

and stockings and went through the water's edge to the grass.

'Thanks awfully,' she called back to him, from the water, The tiny ripples of the lake were warm and clear, they lifted as the boat slid away. 'It's lovely—like sitting in a leaf.'

their boat on to the bank, and looked round with joy. They He laughed at the fancy. Her voice was shrill and strange, were quite alone in a forsaken little stream-mouth, and on calling from the distance. He watched her as she paddled away.

the knoll just behind was the clump of trees.

There was something childlike about her, trustful and defer-

'We will bathe just for a moment,' said Ursula, 'and then ential, like a child. He watched her all the while, as she rowed.

we'll have tea.'

And to Gudrun it was a real delight, in make-belief, to be the They looked round. Nobody could notice them, or could childlike, clinging woman to the man who stood there on the come up in time to see them. In less than a minute Ursula quay, so goodlooking and efficient in his white clothes, and had thrown off her clothes and had slipped naked into the moreover the most important man she knew at the moment.

water, and was swimming out. Quickly, Gudrun joined her.

She did not take any notice of the wavering, indistinct, lam-They swam silently and blissfully for a few minutes, circling bent Birkin, who stood at his side. One figure at a time occu-round their little stream-mouth. Then they slipped ashore pied the field of her attention.

and ran into the grove again, like nymphs.

The boat rustled lightly along the water. They passed the

'How lovely it is to be free,' said Ursula, running swiftly

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here and there between the tree trunks, quite naked, her hair herself, sitting there unconsciously crooning her song, strong blowing loose. The grove was of beech-trees, big and splen-and unquestioned at the centre of her own universe. And did, a steel-grey scaffolding of trunks and boughs, with level Gudrun felt herself outside. Always this desolating, agonised sprays of strong green here and there, whilst through the north-feeling, that she was outside of life, an onlooker, whilst Ursula ern side the distance glimmered open as through a window.

was a partaker, caused Gudrun to suffer from a sense of her When they had run and danced themselves dry, the girls own negation, and made her, that she must always demand quickly dressed and sat down to the fragrant tea. They sat on the other to be aware of her, to be in connection with her.

the northern side of the grove, in the yellow sunshine facing

'Do you mind if I do Dalcroze to that tune, Hurtler?' she the slope of the grassy hill, alone in a little wild world of their asked in a curious muted tone, scarce moving her lips.

own. The tea was hot and aromatic, there were delicious little

'What did you say?' asked Ursula, looking up in peaceful sandwiches of cucumber and of caviare, and winy cakes.

surprise.

'Are you happy, Prune?' cried Ursula in delight, looking at

'Will you sing while I do Dalcroze?' said Gudrun, suffer-her sister.

ing at having to repeat herself.

'Ursula, I'm perfectly happy,' replied Gudrun gravely, look-Ursula thought a moment, gathering her straying wits to-ing at the westering sun.

gether.

'So am I.'

'While you do—?' she asked vaguely.

When they were together, doing the things they enjoyed,

'Dalcroze movements,' said Gudrun, suffering tortures of the two sisters were quite complete in a perfect world of their selfconsciousness, even because of her sister.

own. And this was one of the perfect moments of freedom

'Oh Dalcroze! I couldn't catch the name. DO—I should and delight, such as children alone know, when all seems a love to see you,' cried Ursula, with childish surprised bright-perfect and blissful adventure.

ness. 'What shall I sing?'

When they had finished tea, the two girls sat on, silent

'Sing anything you like, and I'll take the rhythm from it.'

and serene. Then Ursula, who had a beautiful strong voice, But Ursula could not for her life think of anything to began to sing to herself, softly: 'Annchen von Tharau.' Gudrun sing. However, she suddenly began, in a laughing, teasing voice: listened, as she sat beneath the trees, and the yearning came 'My love—is a high-born lady—'

into her heart. Ursula seemed so peaceful and sufficient unto Gudrun, looking as if some invisible chain weighed on her

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hands and feet, began slowly to dance in the eurythmic man-

'Ursula!'

ner, pulsing and fluttering rhythmically with her feet, mak-

'Yes?' said Ursula, opening her eyes out of the trance.

ing slower, regular gestures with her hands and arms, now Gudrun was standing still and pointing, a mocking smile spreading her arms wide, now raising them above her head, on her face, towards the side.

now flinging them softly apart, and lifting her face, her feet

'Ugh!' cried Ursula in sudden panic, starting to her feet.

all the time beating and running to the measure of the song,

'They're quite all right,' rang out Gudrun's sardonic voice.

as if it were some strange incantation, her white, rapt form On the left stood a little cluster of Highland cattle, viv-drifting here and there in a strange impulsive rhapsody, seeming idly coloured and fleecy in the evening light, their horns to be lifted on a breeze of incantation, shuddering with strange branching into the sky, pushing forward their muzzles in-little runs. Ursula sat on the grass, her mouth open in her quisitively, to know what it was all about. Their eyes glittered singing, her eyes laughing as if she thought it was a great joke, through their tangle of hair, their naked nostrils were full of but a yellow light flashing up in them, as she caught some of shadow.

the unconscious ritualistic suggestion of the complex shud-

'Won't they do anything?' cried Ursula in fear.

dering and waving and drifting of her sister's white form, that Gudrun, who was usually frightened of cattle, now shook was clutched in pure, mindless, tossing rhythm, and a will set her head in a queer, half-doubtful, half-sardonic motion, a powerful in a kind of hypnotic influence.

faint smile round her mouth.

'My love is a high-born lady—She is-s-s—rather dark than

'Don't they look charming, Ursula?' cried Gudrun, in a shady—' rang out Ursula's laughing, satiric song, and quicker, high, strident voice, something like the scream of a seagull.

fiercer went Gudrun in the dance, stamping as if she were

'Charming,' cried Ursula in trepidation. 'But won't they trying to throw off some bond, flinging her hands suddenly do anything to us?'

and stamping again, then rushing with face uplifted and throat Again Gudrun looked back at her sister with an enigmatic full and beautiful, and eyes half closed, sightless. The sun was smile, and shook her head.

low and yellow, sinking down, and in the sky floated a thin,

'I'm sure they won't,' she said, as if she had to convince ineffectual moon.

herself also, and yet, as if she were confident of some secret Ursula was quite absorbed in her song, when suddenly power in herself, and had to put it to the test. 'Sit down and Gudrun stopped and said mildly, ironically: sing again,' she called in her high, strident voice.

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'I'm frightened,' cried Ursula, in a pathetic voice, watch-She could feel them just in front of her, it was as if she had ing the group of sturdy short cattle, that stood with their the electric pulse from their breasts running into her hands.

knees planted, and watched with their dark, wicked eyes, Soon she would touch them, actually touch them. A terrible through the matted fringe of their hair. Nevertheless, she sank shiver of fear and pleasure went through her. And all the while, down again, in her former posture.

Ursula, spellbound, kept up her high-pitched thin, irrelevant

'They are quite safe,' came Gudrun's high call. 'Sing some-song, which pierced the fading evening like an incantation.

thing, you've only to sing something.'

Gudrun could hear the cattle breathing heavily with help-It was evident she had a strange passion to dance before less fear and fascination. Oh, they were brave little beasts, the sturdy, handsome cattle.

these wild Scotch bullocks, wild and fleecy. Suddenly one of Ursula began to sing, in a false quavering voice: them snorted, ducked its head, and backed.

'Way down in Tennessee—'

'Hue! Hi-eee!' came a sudden loud shout from the edge of She sounded purely anxious. Nevertheless, Gudrun, with the grove. The cattle broke and fell back quite spontaneously, her arms outspread and her face uplifted, went in a strange went running up the hill, their fleece waving like fire to their palpitating dance towards the cattle, lifting her body towards motion. Gudrun stood suspended out on the grass, Ursula them as if in a spell, her feet pulsing as if in some little frenzy rose to her feet.

of unconscious sensation, her arms, her wrists, her hands It was Gerald and Birkin come to find them, and Gerald stretching and heaving and falling and reaching and reaching had cried out to frighten off the cattle.

and falling, her breasts lifted and shaken towards the cattle,

'What do you think you're doing?' he now called, in a her throat exposed as in some voluptuous ecstasy towards them, high, wondering vexed tone.

whilst she drifted imperceptibly nearer, an uncanny white

'Why have you come?' came back Gudrun's strident cry figure, towards them, carried away in its own rapt trance, ebb-of anger.

ing in strange fluctuations upon the cattle, that waited, and

'What do you think you were doing?' Gerald repeated, ducked their heads a little in sudden contraction from her, automatically.

watching all the time as if hypnotised, their bare horns branch-

'We were doing eurythmics,' laughed Ursula, in a shaken ing in the clear light, as the white figure of the woman ebbed voice.

upon them, in the slow, hypnotising convulsion of the dance.

Gudrun stood aloof looking at them with large dark eyes

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of resentment, suspended for a few moments. Then she walked sight of his loose, vibrating body, perfectly abandoned to its away up the hill, after the cattle, which had gathered in a own dropping and swinging, and by the pallid, sardonic-smil-little, spellbound cluster higher up.

ing face above. Yet automatically she stiffened herself away,

'Where are you going?' Gerald called after her. And he and disapproved. It seemed almost an obscenity, in a man followed her up the hillside. The sun had gone behind the who talked as a rule so very seriously.

hill, and shadows were clinging to the earth, the sky above

'Why not like that?' he mocked. And immediately he was full of travelling light.

dropped again into the incredibly rapid, slack-waggling dance,

'A poor song for a dance,' said Birkin to Ursula, standing watching her malevolently. And moving in the rapid, station-before her with a sardonic, flickering laugh on his face. And ary dance, he came a little nearer, and reached forward with in another second, he was singing softly to himself, and danc-an incredibly mocking, satiric gleam on his face, and would ing a grotesque step-dance in front of her, his limbs and body have kissed her again, had she not started back.

shaking loose, his face flickering palely, a constant thing, whilst

'No, don't!' she cried, really afraid.

his feet beat a rapid mocking tattoo, and his body seemed to

'Cordelia after all,' he said satirically. She was stung, as if hang all loose and quaking in between, like a shadow.

this were an insult. She knew he intended it as such, and it

'I think we've all gone mad,' she said, laughing rather fright-bewildered her. ened.

'And you,' she cried in retort, 'why do you always take

'Pity we aren't madder,' he answered, as he kept up the your soul in your mouth, so frightfully full?'

incessant shaking dance. Then suddenly he leaned up to her

'So that I can spit it out the more readily,' he said, pleased and kissed her fingers lightly, putting his face to hers and by his own retort.

looking into her eyes with a pale grin. She stepped back, af-Gerald Crich, his face narrowing to an intent gleam, fol-fronted.

lowed up the hill with quick strides, straight after Gudrun.

'Offended—?' he asked ironically, suddenly going quite The cattle stood

with their noses together on the brow of a still and reserved again. 'I thought you liked the light fantas-slope, watching the scene below, the men in white hovering tic.'

about the white forms of the women, watching above all

'Not like that,' she said, confused and bewildered, almost Gudrun, who was advancing slowly towards them. She stood affronted. Yet somewhere inside her she was fascinated by the a moment, glancing back at Gerald, and then at the cattle.

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Then in a sudden motion, she lifted her arms and rushed

'You can have one if you'd like it sent to you later on.'

sheer upon the long-horned bullocks, in shuddering irregular She looked at him inscrutably.

runs, pausing for a second and looking at them, then lifting

'You think I'm afraid of you and your cattle, don't you?'

her hands and running forward with a flash, till they ceased she asked.

pawing the ground, and gave way, snorting with terror, lifting His eyes

narrowed dangerously. There was a faint domi-their heads from the ground and flinging themselves away, neering smile on his face.

galloping off into the evening, becoming tiny in the distance,

'Why should I think that?' he said.

and still not stopping.

She was watching him all the time with her dark, dilated, Gudrun remained staring after them, with a masklike inchoate eyes. She leaned forward and swung round her arm, defiant face.

catching him a light blow on the face with the back of her

'Why do you want to drive them mad?' asked Gerald, com-hand.

ing up with her.

'That's why,' she said, mocking.

She took no notice of him, only averted her face from him.

And she felt in her soul an unconquerable desire for deep

'It's not safe, you know,' he persisted. 'They're nasty, when violence against him. She shut off the fear and dismay that they do turn.'

filled her conscious mind. She wanted to do as she did, she

'Turn where? Turn away?' she mocked loudly.

was not going to be afraid.

'No,' he said, 'turn against you.'

He recoiled from the slight blow on his face. He became

'Turn against ME?' she mocked.

deadly pale, and a dangerous flame darkened his eyes. For He could make nothing of this.

some seconds he could not speak, his lungs were so suffused

'Anyway, they gored one of the farmer's cows to death, the with blood, his heart stretched almost to bursting with a great other day,' he said.

gush of ungovernable emotion. It was as if some reservoir of

'What do I care?' she said.

black emotion had burst within him, and swamped him.

'I cared though,' he replied, 'seeing that they're my cattle.'

'You have struck the first blow,' he said at last, forcing the

'How are they yours! You haven't swallowed them. Give words from his lungs, in a voice so soft and low, it sounded me one of them now,' she said, holding out her hand.

like a dream within her, not spoken in the outer air.

'You know where they are,' he said, pointing over the hill.

'And I shall strike the last,' she retorted involuntarily, with

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confident assurance. He was silent, he did not contradict her.

'Don't be angry with me.'

She stood negligently, staring away from him, into the A flame flew over him, and he was unconscious. Yet he distance. On the edge of her consciousness the question was stammered:

asking itself, automatically:

'I'm not angry with you. I'm in love with you.'

'Why ARE you behaving in this IMPOSSIBLE and ri-His mind was gone, he grasped for sufficient mechanical diculous fashion.' But she was sullen, she half shoved the ques-control, to save himself. She laughed a silvery little mockery, tion out of herself. She could not get it clean away, so she felt yet intolerably caressive.

selfconscious.

'That's one way of putting it,' she said.

Gerald, very pale, was watching her closely. His eyes were The terrible swooning burden on his mind, the awful lit up with intent lights, absorbed and gleaming. She turned swooning, the loss of all his control, was too much for him.

suddenly on him.

He grasped her arm in his one hand, as if his hand were iron.

'It's you who make me behave like this, you know,' she

'It's all right, then, is it?' he said, holding her arrested.

said, almost suggestive.

She looked at the face with the fixed eyes, set before her,

'I? How?' he said.

and her blood ran cold.

But she turned away, and set off towards the lake. Below,

'Yes, it's all right,' she said softly, as if drugged, her voice on the water, lanterns were coming alight, faint ghosts of warm crooning and witch-like.

flame floating in the pallor of the first twilight. The earth was He walked on beside her, a striding, mindless body. But spread with darkness, like lacquer, overhead was a pale sky, all he recovered a little as he went. He suffered badly. He had primrose, and the lake was pale as milk in one part. Away at killed his brother when a boy, and was set apart, like Cain.

the landing stage, tiniest points of coloured rays were string-They found Birkin and Ursula sitting together by the boats, ing themselves in the dusk. The launch was being illumi-talking and laughing. Birkin had been teasing Ursula.

nated. All round, shadow was gathering from the trees.

'Do you smell this little marsh?' he said, sniffing the air.

Gerald, white like a presence in his summer clothes, was He was very sensitive to scents, and quick in understanding following down the open grassy slope. Gudrun waited for them.

him to come up. Then she softly put out her hand and touched

'It's rather nice,' she said.

him, saying softly:

'No,' he replied, 'alarming.'

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'Why alarming?' she laughed.

'Probably,' he replied. 'In part, certainly. Whether we are

'It seethes and seethes, a river of darkness,' he said, 'put-that, in toto, I don't yet know.'

ting forth lilies and snakes, and the ignis fatuus, and rolling

'You mean we are flowers of dissolution—fleurs du mal? I all the time onward. That's what we never take into count—

don't feel as if I were,' she protested.

that it rolls onwards.'

He was silent for a time.

'What does?'

'I don't feel as if we were, ALTOGETHER,' he replied.

'The other river, the black river. We always consider the

'Some people are pure flowers of dark corruption—lilies. But silver river of life, rolling on and quickening all the world to a there ought to be some roses, warm and flamy. You know brightness, on and on to heaven, flowing into a

bright eternal Herakleitos says "a dry soul is best." I know so well what that sea, a heaven of angels thronging. But the other is our real means. Do you?'

reality—'

'I'm not sure,' Ursula replied. 'But what if people ARE all

'But what other? I don't see any other,' said Ursula.

flowers of dissolution—when they're flowers at all—what dif-

'It is your reality, nevertheless,' he said; 'that dark river of ference does it make?'

dissolution. You see it rolls in us just as the other rolls—the

'No difference—and all the difference. Dissolution rolls black river of corruption. And our flowers are of this—our on, just as production does,' he said. 'It is a progressive pro-sea-born Aphrodite, all our white phosphorescent flowers of cess—and it ends in universal nothing—the end of the world, sensuous perfection, all our reality, nowadays.'

if you like. But why isn't the end of the world as good as the

'You mean that Aphrodite is really deathly?' asked Ursula.

beginning?'

'I mean she is the flowering mystery of the death-process,

'I suppose it isn't,' said Ursula, rather angry.

yes,' he replied. 'When the stream of synthetic creation lapses,

'Oh yes, ultimately,' he said. 'It means a new cycle of crewe find ourselves part of the inverse process, the blood of ation after—but not for us. If it is the end, then we are of the destructive creation. Aphrodite is born in the first spasm of end—fleurs du mal if you like. If we are fleurs du mal, we are universal dissolution—then the snakes and swans and lotus— not roses of

happiness, and there you are.'

marsh-flowers—and Gudrun and Gerald—born in the pro-

'But I think I am,' said Ursula. 'I think I am a rose of cess of destructive creation.'

happiness.'

'And you and me—?' she asked.

'Ready-made?' he asked ironically.

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'No—real,' she said, hurt.

as the launch, all illuminated, veered into the great shadow,

'If we are the end, we are not the beginning,' he said.

stirring her outlines of half-living lights, puffing out her music

'Yes we are,' she said. 'The beginning comes out of the in little drifts.

end.'

All were lighting up. Here and there, close against the

'After it, not out of it. After us, not out of us.'

faint water, and at the far end of the lake, where the water lay

'You are a devil, you know, really,' she said. 'You want to milky in the last whiteness of the sky, and there was no shadow, destroy our hope. You WANT US to be deathly.'

solitary, frail flames of lanterns floated from the unseen boats.

'No,' he said, 'I only want us to KNOW what we are.'

There was a sound of oars, and a boat passed from the pallor

'Ha!' she cried in anger. 'You only want us to know death.'

into the darkness under the wood, where her lanterns seemed

'You're quite right,' said the soft voice of Gerald, out of to kindle into fire, hanging in ruddy lovely globes. And again, the dusk behind.

in the lake, shadowy red gleams hovered in reflection about Birkin rose. Gerald and Gudrun came up. They all began the boat. Everywhere were these noiseless ruddy creatures of to smoke, in the moments of silence. One after another, Birkin fire drifting near the surface of the water, caught at by the lighted their cigarettes. The match flickered in the twilight, rarest, scarce visible reflections.

and they were all smoking peacefully by the water-side. The Birkin brought the lanterns from the bigger boat, and the lake was dim, the light dying from off it, in the midst of the four shadowy white figures gathered round, to light them.

dark land. The air all round was intangible, neither here nor Ursula held up the first, Birkin lowered the light from the there, and there was an unreal noise of banjoes, or suchlike rosy, glowing cup of his hands, into the depths of the lantern. music.

It was kindled, and they all stood back to look at the great As the golden swim of light overhead died out, the moon blue moon of light that hung from Ursula's hand, casting a gained brightness, and seemed to begin to smile forth her strange gleam on her face. It flickered, and Birkin went bendascendancy. The dark woods on the opposite shore melted ing over the well of light. His face shone out like an appari-into universal shadow. And amid this universal under-shadow, tion, so unconscious, and again, something demoniacal. Ursula there was a scattered intrusion of lights. Far down the lake was dim and veiled, looming over him.

were fantastic pale strings of colour, like beads of wan fire,

'That is all right,' said his voice softly.

green and red and yellow. The music came out in a little puff, She held up the lantern. It had a flight of storks streaming

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through a turquoise sky of light, over a dark earth.

earth,' said Birkin to her.

'This is beautiful,' she said.

'Anything but the earth itself,' she laughed, watching his

'Lovely,' echoed Gudrun, who wanted to hold one also, live hands that hovered to attend to the light.

and lift it up full of beauty.

'I'm dying to see what my second one is,' cried Gudrun, in

'Light one for me,' she said. Gerald stood by her, incapaci-a vibrating rather strident voice, that seemed to repel the oth-tated. Birkin lit the lantern she held up. Her heart beat with ers from her.

anxiety, to see how beautiful it would be. It was primrose Birkin went and kindled it. It was of a lovely deep blue yellow, with tall straight flowers growing darkly from their colour, with a red floor, and a great white cuttle-fish flowing dark leaves, lifting their heads into the primrose day, while in white soft streams all over it. The cuttle-fish had a face butterflies hovered about them, in the pure clear light.

that stared straight from the heart of the light, very fixed and Gudrun gave a little cry of excitement, as if pierced with coldly intent.

delight.

'How truly terrifying!' exclaimed Gudrun, in a voice of

'Isn't it beautiful, oh, isn't it beautiful!'

horror. Gerald, at her side, gave a low laugh.

Her soul was really pierced with beauty, she was trans-

'But isn't it really fearful!' she cried in dismay.

lated beyond herself. Gerald leaned near to her, into her zone Again he laughed, and said:

of light, as if to see. He came close to her, and stood touching

'Change it with Ursula, for the crabs.'

her, looking with her at the primrose-shining globe. And she Gudrun was silent for a moment.

turned her face to his, that was faintly bright in the light of

'Ursula,' she said, 'could you bear to have this fearful thing?'

the lantern, and they stood together in one luminous union,

'I think the colouring is LOVELY,' said Ursula.

close together and ringed round with light, all the rest ex-

'So do I,' said Gudrun. 'But could you BEAR to have it cluded.

swinging to your boat? Don't you want to destroy it at Birkin looked away, and went to light Ursula's second lan-ONCE?'

tern. It had a pale ruddy sea-bottom, with black crabs and

'Oh no,' said Ursula. 'I don't want to destroy it.'

sea-weed moving sinuously under a transparent sea, that passed

'Well do you mind having it instead of the crabs? Are you into flamy ruddiness above.

sure you don't mind?'

'You've got the heavens above, and the waters under the Gudrun came forward to exchange lanterns.

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'No,' said Ursula, yielding up the crabs and receiving the emphasising the shadow around.

cuttle-fish.

'Kiss me before we go,' came his voice softly from out of Yet she could not help feeling rather resentful at the way the shadow above.

in which Gudrun and Gerald should assume a right over her, She stopped her work in real, momentary astonishment.

a precedence.

'But why?' she exclaimed, in pure surprise.

'Come then,' said Birkin. 'I'll put them on the boats.'

'Why?' he echoed, ironically.

He and Ursula were moving away to the big boat.

And she looked at him fixedly for some moments. Then

'I suppose you'll row me back, Rupert,' said Gerald, out of she leaned forward and kissed him, with a slow, luxurious the pale shadow of the evening.

kiss, lingering on the mouth. And then she took the lanterns

'Won't you go with Gudrun in the canoe?' said Birkin.

from him, while he stood swooning with the perfect fire that

'It'll be more interesting.'

burned in all his joints.

There was a moment's pause. Birkin and Ursula stood They lifted the canoe into the water, Gudrun took her dimly, with their swinging lanterns, by the water's edge. The place, and Gerald pushed off.

world was all illusive.

'Are you sure you don't hurt your hand, doing that?' she

'Is that all right?' said Gudrun to him.

asked, solicitous. 'Because I could have done it PERFECTLY.'

'It'll suit ME very well,' he said. 'But what about you,

'I don't hurt myself,' he said in a low, soft voice, that ca-and the rowing? I don't see why you should pull me.'

ressed her with inexpressible beauty.

'Why not?' she said. 'I can pull you as well as I could pull And she watched him as he sat near her, very near to her, Ursula.'

in the stern of the canoe, his legs coming towards hers, his By her tone he could tell she wanted to have him in the feet touching hers. And she paddled softly, lingeringly, long-boat to herself, and that she was subtly gratified that she should ing for him to say something meaningful to her. But he re-have power over them both. He gave himself, in a strange, mained silent.

electric submission.

'You like this, do you?' she said, in a gentle, solicitous voice.

She handed him the lanterns, whilst she went to fix the He laughed shortly.

cane at the end of the canoe. He followed after her, and stood

'There is a space between us,' he said, in the same low, with the lanterns dangling against his white-flannelled thighs, unconscious voice, as if something were speaking out of him.

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And she was as if magically aware of their being balanced in softness behind him.

separation, in the boat. She swooned with acute comprehen-Gudrun rested her paddle and looked round. The canoe sion and pleasure.

lifted with the lightest ebbing of the water. Gerald's white

'But I'm very near,' she said caressively, gaily.

knees were very near to her.

'Yet distant, distant,' he said.

'Isn't it beautiful!' she said softly, as if reverently.

Again she was silent with pleasure, before she answered, She looked at him, as he leaned back against the faint crystal speaking with a reedy, thrilled voice:

of the lantern-light. She could see his face, although it was a

'Yet we cannot very well change, whilst we are on the wa-pure shadow. But it was a piece of twilight. And her breast ter.' She caressed him subtly and strangely, having him com-was keen with passion for him, he was so beautiful in his male pletely at her mercy.

stillness and mystery. It was a certain pure effluence of male-A dozen or more boats on the lake swung their rosy and ness, like an aroma from his softly, firmly moulded contours, moon-like lanterns low on the water, that reflected as from a a certain rich perfection of his presence, that touched her with fire. In the distance, the steamer twanged and thrummed and an ecstasy, a thrill of pure intoxication. She loved to look at washed with her faintly-splashing paddles, trailing her strings him. For the present she did not want to touch him, to know of coloured lights, and occasionally lighting up the whole scene the further, satisfying substance of his living body. He was luridly with an effusion of fireworks, Roman candles and purely intangible, yet so near. Her hands lay on the paddle sheafs of stars and other simple effects, illuminating the sur-like slumber, she only wanted to see him, like a crystal shadow, face of the water, and showing the boats creeping round, low to feel his essential presence.

down. Then the lovely darkness fell again, the lanterns and

'Yes,' he said vaguely. 'It is very beautiful.'

the little threaded lights glimmered softly, there was a muffled He was listening to the faint near sounds, the dropping of knocking of oars and a waving of music.

water-drops from the oar-blades, the slight drumming of the Gudrun paddled almost imperceptibly. Gerald could see, lanterns behind him, as they rubbed against one another, the not far ahead, the rich blue and the rose globes of Ursula's occasional rustling of Gudrun's full skirt, an alien land noise.

lanterns swaying softly cheek to cheek as Birkin rowed, and His mind was almost submerged, he was almost transfused, iridescent, evanescent gleams

chasing in the wake. He was lapsed out for the first time in his life, into the things about aware, too, of his own delicately coloured lights casting their him. For he always kept such a keen attentiveness, concen-

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trated and unyielding in himself. Now he had let go, imper-somebody was singing. Then as if the night smashed, sud-ceptibly he was melting into oneness with the whole. It was denly there was a great shout, a confusion of shouting, war-like pure, perfect sleep, his first great sleep of life. He had ring on the water, then the horrid noise of paddles reversed been so insistent, so guarded, all his life. But here was sleep, and churned violently.

and peace, and perfect lapsing out.

Gerald sat up, and Gudrun looked at him in fear.

'Shall I row to the landing-stage?' asked Gudrun wist-

'Somebody in the water,' he said, angrily, and desperately, fully.

looking keenly across the dusk. 'Can you row up?'

'Anywhere,' he answered. 'Let it drift.'

'Where, to the launch?' asked Gudrun, in nervous panic.

'Tell me then, if we are running into anything,' she re-

'Yes.'

plied, in that very quiet, toneless voice of sheer intimacy.

'You'll tell me if I don't steer straight,' she said, in nervous

'The lights will show,' he said.

apprehension.

So they drifted almost motionless, in silence. He wanted

'You keep pretty level,' he said, and the canoe hastened silence, pure and whole. But she was uneasy yet for some word, forward.

for some assurance.

The shouting and the noise continued, sounding horrid

'Nobody will miss you?' she asked, anxious for some com-through the dusk, over the surface of the water.

munication.

'Wasn't this BOUND to happen?' said Gudrun, with heavy

'Miss me?' he echoed. 'No! Why?'

hateful irony. But he hardly heard, and she glanced over her

'I wondered if anybody would be looking for you.'

shoulder to see her way. The half-dark waters were sprinkled

'Why should they look for me?' And then he remem-with lovely bubbles of swaying lights, the launch did not look bered his manners. 'But perhaps you want to get back,' he far off. She was rocking her lights in the early night.

Gudrun said, in a changed voice.

rowed as hard as she could. But now that it was a serious

'No, I don't want to get back,' she replied. 'No, I assure matter, she seemed uncertain and clumsy in her stroke, it was you.'

difficult to paddle swiftly. She glanced at his face. He was

'You're quite sure it's all right for you?'

looking fixedly into the darkness, very keen and alert and

'Perfectly all right.'

single in himself, instrumental. Her heart sank, she seemed to And again they were still. The launch twanged and hooted, die a death. 'Of course,' she said to herself, 'nobody will be

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drowned. Of course they won't. It would be too extravagant

'You'd be better if you were in bed, Winnie,' Gerald mut-and sensational.' But her heart was cold, because of his sharp tered to himself.

impersonal face. It was as if he belonged naturally to dread He was stooping

unlacing his shoes, pushing them off with and catastrophe, as if he were himself again.

the foot. Then he threw his soft hat into the bottom of the Then there came a child's voice, a girl's high, piercing boat.

shriek:

'You can't go into the water with your hurt hand,' said

Gudrun, panting, in a low voice of horror.

The blood ran cold in Gudrun's veins.

'What? It won't hurt.'

'It's Diana, is it,' muttered Gerald. 'The young monkey, He had struggled out of his jacket, and had dropped it she'd have to be up to some of her tricks.'

between his feet. He sat bare-headed, all in white now. He And he glanced again at the paddle, the boat was not go-felt the belt at his waist. They were nearing the launch, which ing quickly enough for him. It made Gudrun almost helpless stood still big above them, her myriad lamps making lovely at the rowing, this nervous stress. She kept up with all her darts, and sinuous running tongues of ugly red and green and might. Still the voices were calling and answering.

yellow light on the lustrous dark water, under the shadow.

'Where, where? There you are—that's it. Which? No—

'Oh get her out! Oh Di, DARLING! Oh get her out! Oh No-o-o. Damn it all, here, HERE—' Boats were hurrying Daddy, Oh Daddy!' moaned the child's voice, in distraction.

from all directions to the scene, coloured lanterns could be Somebody was in the water, with a life belt. Two boats paddled seen waving close to the surface of the lake, reflections sway-near, their lanterns swinging ineffectually, the boats nosing ing after them in uneven haste. The steamer hooted again, for round.

some unknown reason. Gudrun's boat was travelling quickly,

'Hi there—Rockley!—hi there!'

the lanterns were swinging behind Gerald.

'Mr Gerald!' came the captain's terrified voice. 'Miss Diana's And then again came the child's high, screaming voice, in the water.'

with a note of weeping and impatience in it now:

'Anybody gone in for her?' came Gerald's sharp voice.

'Di—Oh Di—Oh Di—Di—!'

'Young Doctor Brindell, sir.'

It was a terrible sound, coming through the obscure air of

'Where?'

the evening.

'Can't see no signs of them, sir. Everybody's looking, but

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there's nothing so far.'

She started, hearing someone say: 'There he is.' She saw There was a moment's ominous pause.

the movement of his swimming, like a water-rat. And she

'Where did she go in?'

rowed involuntarily to him. But he was near another boat, a

'I think—about where that boat is,' came the uncertain bigger one. Still she rowed towards him. She must be very answer, 'that one with red and green lights.'

near. She saw him—he looked like a seal. He looked like a seal

'Row there,' said Gerald quietly to Gudrun.

as he took hold of the side of the boat. His fair hair was washed

'Get her out, Gerald, oh get her out,' the child's voice was down on his round head, his face seemed to glisten suavely.

crying anxiously. He took no heed.

She could hear him panting.

'Lean back that way,' said Gerald to Gudrun, as he stood Then he clambered into the boat. Oh, and the beauty of up in the frail boat. 'She won't upset.'

the subjection of his loins, white and dimly luminous as be In another moment, he had dropped clean down, soft and climbed over the side of the boat, made her want to die, to plumb, into the water. Gudrun was swaying violently in her die. The beauty of his dim and luminous loins as be climbed

boat, the agitated water shook with transient lights, she realised into the boat, his back rounded and soft—ah, this was too that it was faintly moonlight, and that he was gone. So it was much for her, too final a vision. She knew it, and it was fatal possible to be gone. A terrible sense of fatality robbed her of The terrible hopelessness of fate, and of beauty, such beauty!

all feeling and thought. She knew he was gone out of the He was not like a man to her, he was an incarnation, a world, there was merely the same world, and absence, his ab-great phase of life. She saw him press the water out of his face, sence. The night seemed large and vacuous. Lanterns swayed and look at the bandage on his hand. And she knew it was all here and there, people were talking in an undertone on the no good, and that she would never go beyond him, he was the launch and in the boats. She could hear Winifred moaning: final approximation of life to her.

'OH DO FIND HER GERALD, DO FIND HER,' and

'Put the lights out, we shall see better,' came his voice, someone trying to comfort the child. Gudrun paddled aim-sudden and mechanical and belonging to the world of man.

lessly here and there. The terrible, massive, cold, boundless She could scarcely believe there was a world of man. She leaned surface of the water terrified her beyond words. Would he round and blew out her lanterns. They were difficult to blow never come back? She felt she must jump into the water too, out. Everywhere the lights were gone save the coloured points to know the horror also.

on the sides of the launch. The blueygrey, early night spread

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level around, the moon was overhead, there were shadows of The boats of the two sisters pulled together.

boats here and there.

'Where is Gerald?' said Gudrun.

Again there was a splash, and he was gone under. Gudrun

'He's dived again,' said Ursula plaintively. 'And I know he sat, sick at heart, frightened of the great, level surface of the ought not, with his hurt hand and everything.'

water, so heavy and deadly. She was so alone, with the level,

'I'll take him in home this time,' said Birkin.

unliving field of the water stretching beneath her. It was not The boats swayed again from the wash of steamer. Gudrun a good isolation, it was a terrible, cold separation of suspense.

and Ursula kept a look-out for Gerald.

She was suspended upon the surface of the insidious reality

'There he is!' cried Ursula, who had the sharpest eyes. He until such time as she also should disappear beneath it.

had not been long under. Birkin pulled towards him, Gudrun Then she knew, by a stirring of voices, that he had climbed following. He swam slowly, and caught hold of the boat with out again, into a boat. She sat wanting connection with him.

his wounded hand. It slipped, and he sank back.

Strenuously she claimed her connection with him, across the

'Why don't you help him?' cried Ursula sharply.

invisible space of the water. But round her heart was an isola-He came again, and Birkin leaned to help him in to the tion unbearable, through which nothing would penetrate.

boat. Gudrun again watched Gerald climb out of the water,

'Take the launch in. It's no use keeping her there. Get but this time slowly, heavily, with the blind clambering mo-lines for the dragging,' came the decisive, instrumental voice, tions of an amphibious beast, clumsy. Again the moon shone that was full of the sound of the world.

with faint luminosity on his white wet figure, on the stoop-The launch began gradually to beat the waters.

ing back and the rounded loins. But it looked defeated now,

'Gerald! Gerald!' came the wild crying voice of Winifred.

his body, it clambered and fell with slow clumsiness. He was He did not answer. Slowly the launch drifted round in a pa-breathing hoarsely too, like an animal that is suffering. He sat thetic, clumsy circle, and slunk away to the land, retreating slack and motionless in the boat, his head blunt and blind into the dimness. The wash of her paddles grew duller. Gudrun like a seal's, his whole appearance inhuman, unknowing.

rocked in her light boat, and dipped the paddle automatically Gudrun shuddered as she mechanically followed his boat.

to steady herself.

Birkin rowed without speaking to the landing-stage.

'Gudrun?' called Ursula's voice.

'Where are you going?' Gerald asked suddenly, as if just

'Ursula!'

waking up.

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'Home,' said Birkin.

But it can't be helped; I've done what I could for the mo-

'Oh no!' said Gerald imperiously. 'We can't go home while ment. I could go on diving, of course—not much, though—

they're in the water. Turn back again, I'm going to find them.'

and not much use—'

The women were frightened, his voice was so imperative and He moved away barefoot, on the planks of the platform.

dangerous, almost mad, not to be opposed.

Then he trod on something sharp.

'No!' said Birkin. 'You can't.' There was a strange fluid com-

'Of course, you've got no shoes on,' said Birkin.

pulsion in his voice. Gerald was silent in a battle of wills. It

'His shoes are here!' cried Gudrun from below. She was was as if he would kill the other man. But Birkin rowed evenly making fast her boat.

and unswerving, with an inhuman inevitability.

Gerald waited for them to be brought to him. Gudrun

'Why should you interfere?' said Gerald, in hate.

came with them. He pulled them on his feet.

Birkin did not answer. He rowed towards the land. And

'If you once die,' he said, 'then when it's over, it's finished.

Gerald sat mute, like a dumb beast, panting, his teeth chat-Why come to life again? There's room under that water there tering, his arms inert, his head like a seal's head.

for thousands.'

They came to the landing-stage. Wet and naked-looking,

'Two is enough,' she said murmuring.

Gerald climbed up the few steps. There stood his father, in He dragged on his second shoe. He was shivering violently, the night.

and his jaw shook as he spoke.

'Father!' he said.

'That's true,' he said, 'maybe. But it's curious how much

'Yes my boy? Go home and get those things off.'

room there seems, a whole universe under there; and as cold

'We shan't save them, father,' said Gerald.

as hell, you're as helpless as if your head was cut off.' He could

'There's hope yet, my boy.'

scarcely speak, he shook so violently. 'There's one thing about

'I'm afraid not. There's no knowing where they are. You our family, you know,' he continued. 'Once anything goes can't find them. And there's a current, as cold as hell.'

wrong, it can never be put right again—not with us. I've no-

'We'll let the water out,' said the father. 'Go home you ticed it all my life—you can't put a thing right, once it has and look to yourself. See that he's looked after, Rupert,' he gone wrong.'

added in a neutral voice.

They were walking across the highroad to the house.

'Well father, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm afraid it's my fault.

'And do you know, when you are down there, it is so cold,

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actually, and so endless, so different really from what it is on Birkin fixed the iron handle of the sluice, and turned it top, so endless—you wonder how it is so many are alive, why with a wrench. The cogs began slowly to rise. He turned and we're up here. Are you going? I shall see you again, shan't I?

turned, like a slave, his white figure became distinct. Ursula Good-night, and thank you. Thank you very much!'

looked away. She could not bear to see him winding heavily The two girls waited a while, to see if there were any hope.

and laboriously, bending and rising mechanically like a slave, The moon shone clearly overhead, with almost impertinent turning the handle.

brightness, the small dark boats clustered on the water, there Then, a real shock to her, there came a loud splashing of were voices and subdued shouts. But it was all to no purpose.

water from out of the dark, tree-filled hollow beyond the Gudrun went home when Birkin returned.

road, a splashing that deepened rapidly to a harsh roar, and He was commissioned to open the sluice that let out the then became a heavy, booming noise of a great body of water water from the lake, which was pierced at one end, near the falling solidly all the time. It occupied the whole of the night, highroad, thus serving as a reservoir to supply with water the this great steady booming of water, everything was drowned distant mines, in case of necessity. 'Come with me,' he said to within it, drowned and lost. Ursula seemed to have to struggle Ursula, 'and then I will walk home with you, when I've done for her life. She put her hands over her ears, and looked at the this.'

high bland moon.

He called at the water-keeper's cottage and took the key of

'Can't we go now?' she cried to Birkin, who was watching the sluice. They went through a little gate from the high-the water on the steps, to see if it would get any lower. It road, to the head of the water, where was a great stone basin seemed to fascinate him. He looked at her and nodded.

which received the overflow, and a flight of stone steps de-The little dark boats had moved nearer, people were crowd-scended into the depths of the water itself. At the head of the ing curiously along the hedge by the highroad, to see what steps was the lock of the sluice-gate.

was to be seen. Birkin and Ursula went to the cottage with The night was silver-grey and perfect, save for the scat-the key, then turned their backs on the lake. She was in great tered restless sound of voices. The grey sheen of the moon-haste. She could not bear the terrible crushing boom of the light caught the stretch of water, dark boats plashed and escaping water.

moved. But Ursula's mind ceased to be receptive, everything

'Do you think they are dead?' she cried in a high voice, to was unimportant and unreal.

make herself heard.

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'Yes,' he replied.

through with the death process.'

'Isn't it horrible!'

'And aren't you?' asked Ursula nervously.

He paid no heed. They walked up the hill, further and They walked on for some way in silence, under the trees.

further away from the noise.

Then he said, slowly, as if afraid:

'Do you mind very much?' she asked him.

'There is life which belongs to death, and there is life which

'I don't mind about the dead,' he said, 'once they are dead.

isn't death. One is tired of the life that belongs to death—our The worst of it is, they cling on to the living, and won't let kind of life. But whether it is finished, God knows. I want go.'

love that is like sleep, like being born again, vulnerable as a She pondered for a time.

baby that just comes into the world.'

'Yes,' she said. 'The FACT of death doesn't really seem to Ursula listened, half attentive, half avoiding what he said.

matter much, does it?'

She seemed to catch the drift of his statement, and then she

'No,' he said. 'What does it matter if Diana Crich is alive drew away. She wanted to hear, but she did not want to be or dead?'

implicated. She was reluctant to yield there, where he wanted

'Doesn't it?' she said, shocked.

her, to yield as it were her very identity.

'No, why should it? Better she were dead—she'll be much

'Why should love be like sleep?' she asked sadly.

more real. She'll be positive in death. In life she was a fret-

'I don't know. So that it is like death—I DO want to die ting, negated thing.'

from this life—and yet it is more than life itself. One is deliv-

'You are rather horrible,' murmured Ursula.

ered over like a naked infant from the womb, all the old de-

'No! I'd rather Diana Crich were dead. Her living some-fences and the old body gone, and new air around one, that how, was all wrong. As for the young man, poor devil—he'll has never been breathed before.'

find his way out quickly instead of slowly. Death is all right—

She listened, making out what he said. She knew, as well nothing better.'

as he knew, that words themselves do not convey meaning,

'Yet you don't want to die,' she challenged him.

that they are but a gesture we make, a dumb show like any He was silent for a time. Then he said, in a voice that was other. And she seemed to feel his gesture through her blood, frightening to her in its change:

and she drew back, even though her desire sent her forward.

'I should like to be through with it—I should like to be

'But,' she said gravely, 'didn't you say you wanted some-

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thing that was NOT love—something beyond love?'

He changed, laughed softly, and turned and took her in He turned in confusion. There was always confusion in his arms, in the middle of the road.

speech. Yet it must be spoken. Whichever way one moved, if

'Yes,' he said softly.

one were to move forwards, one must break a way through.

And he kissed her face and brow, slowly, gently, with a And to know, to give utterance, was to break a way through sort of delicate happiness which surprised her extremely, and the walls of the prison as the infant in labour strives through to which she could not respond. They were soft, blind kisses, the walls of the womb. There is no new movement now, with-perfect in their stillness. Yet she held back from them. It was out the breaking through of the old body, deliberately, in like strange moths, very soft and silent, settling on her from knowledge, in the struggle to get out.

the darkness of her soul. She was uneasy. She drew away.

'I don't want love,' he said. 'I don't want to know you. I

'Isn't somebody coming?' she said.

want to be gone out of myself, and you to be lost to yourself, So they looked down the dark road, then set off again walk-so we are found different. One shouldn't talk when one is ing towards Beldover. Then suddenly, to show him she was tired and wretched. One Hamletises, and it seems a lie. Only no shallow prude, she stopped and held him tight, hard against believe me when I show you a bit of healthy pride and insou-her, and covered his face with hard, fierce kisses of passion. In ciance. I hate myself serious.'

spite of his otherness, the old blood beat up in him.

'Why shouldn't you be serious?' she said.

'Not this,' he whimpered to himself, as the first He thought for a minute, then he said, sulkily: perfect mood of softness and sleep-loveliness ebbed back away

'I don't know.' Then they walked on in silence, at outs. He from the rushing of passion that came up to his limbs and was vague and lost.

over his face as she drew him. And soon he was a perfect hard

'Isn't it strange,' she said, suddenly putting her hand on flame of passionate desire for her. Yet in the small core of the his arm, with a loving impulse, 'how we always talk like this! I flame was an unyielding anguish of another thing. But this suppose we do love each other, in some way.'

also was lost; he only wanted her, with an extreme desire that

'Oh yes,' he said; 'too much.'

seemed inevitable as death, beyond question.

She laughed almost gaily.

Then, satisfied and shattered, fulfilled and destroyed, he

'You'd have to have it your own way, wouldn't you?' she went home away

from her, drifting vaguely through the dark-teased. 'You could never take it on trust.'

ness, lapsed into the old fire of burning passion. Far away, far

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away, there seemed to be a small lament in the darkness. But

'But the men would find them just the same without you—

what did it matter? What did it matter, what did anything why should you insist?'

matter save this ultimate and triumphant experience of physical Gerald looked up at him. Then he put his hand affection-passion, that had blazed up anew like a new spell of life. 'I ately on Birkin's shoulder, saying:

was becoming quite dead-alive, nothing but a word-bag,' he

'Don't you bother about me, Rupert. If there's anybody's said in triumph, scorning his other self. Yet somewhere far off health to think about, it's yours, not mine. How do you feel and small, the other hovered.

yourself?'

The men were still dragging the lake when he got back.

'Very well. But you, you spoil your own chance of life—

He stood on the bank and heard Gerald's voice. The water you waste your best self.'

was still booming in the night, the moon was fair, the hills Gerald was silent for a moment. Then he said: beyond were elusive. The lake was sinking. There came the

'Waste it? What else is there to do with it?'

raw smell of the banks, in the night air.

'But leave this, won't you? You force yourself into horrors, Up at Shortlands there were lights in the windows, as if and put a millstone of beastly memories round your neck.

nobody had gone to bed. On the landing-stage was the old Come away now.'

doctor, the father of the young man who was lost. He stood

'A millstone of beastly memories!' Gerald repeated. Then quite silent, waiting. Birkin also stood and watched, Gerald he put his hand again affectionately on Birkin's shoulder. 'God, came up in a boat.

you've got such a telling way of putting things, Rupert, you

'You still here, Rupert?' he said. 'We can't get them. The have.'

bottom slopes, you know, very steep. The water lies between Birkin's heart sank. He was irritated and weary of having a two very sharp slopes, with little branch valleys, and God telling way of putting things.

knows where the drift will take you. It isn't as if it was a level

'Won't you leave it? Come over to my place'—he urged as bottom. You never know where you are, with the dragging.'

one urges a drunken man.

'Is there any need for you to be working?' said Birkin.

'No,' said Gerald coaxingly, his arm across the other man's

'Wouldn't it be much better if you went to bed?'

shoulder. 'Thanks very much, Rupert—I shall be glad to come

'To bed! Good God, do you think I should sleep? We'll tomorrow, if that'll do. You understand, don't you? I want to find 'em, before I go away from here.'

see this job through. But I'll come tomorrow, right enough.

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Oh, I'd rather come and have a chat with you than—than do As the birds were whistling for the first morning, and the anything else, I verily believe. Yes, I would. You mean a lot to hills at the back of the desolate lake stood radiant with the me, Rupert, more than you know.'

new mists, there was a straggling procession up to Shortlands,

'What do I mean, more than I know?' asked Birkin irrita-men bearing the bodies on a stretcher, Gerald going beside bly. He was acutely aware of Gerald's hand on his shoulder.

them, the two grey-bearded fathers following in silence. In-And he did not want this altercation. He wanted the other doors the family was all sitting up, waiting. Somebody must man to come out of the ugly misery.

go to tell the mother, in her room. The doctor in secret

'I'll tell you another time,' said Gerald coaxingly.

struggled to bring back his son, till he himself was exhausted.

'Come along with me now—I want you to come,' said Over all the outlying district was a hush of dreadful ex-Birkin.

citement on that Sunday morning. The colliery people felt as There was a pause, intense and real. Birkin wondered why if this catastrophe had happened directly to themselves, in-his own heart beat so heavily. Then Gerald's fingers gripped deed they were more shocked and frightened than if their hard and communicative into Birkin's shoulder, as he said: own men had been killed. Such a tragedy in Shortlands, the 'No, I'll see this job through, Rupert. Thank you—I know high home of the district! One of the young mistresses, per-what you mean. We're all right, you know, you and me.'

sisting in dancing on the cabin roof of the launch, wilful young

'I may be all right, but I'm sure you're not, mucking about madam, drowned in the midst of the festival, with the young here,' said Birkin. And he went away.

doctor! Everywhere on the Sunday morning, the colliers wan-The bodies of the dead were not recovered till towards dered about, discussing the calamity. At all the Sunday din-dawn. Diana had her arms tight round the neck of the young ners of the people, there seemed a strange presence. It was as man, choking him.

if the angel of death were very near, there was a sense of the

'She killed him,' said Gerald.

supernatural in the air. The men had excited, startled faces, The moon sloped down the sky and sank at last. The lake the women looked solemn, some of them had been crying. was sunk to quarter size, it had horrible raw banks of clay, The children enjoyed the excitement at first. There was an that smelled of raw rottenish water. Dawn roused faintly be-intensity in the air, almost magical. Did all enjoy it? Did all hind the eastern hill. The water still boomed through the enjoy the thrill?

sluice.

Gudrun had wild ideas of rushing to comfort Gerald. She

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was thinking all the time of the perfect comforting, reassuring thing to say to him. She was shocked and frightened, but she put that away, thinking of how she should deport herself with Gerald: act her part. That was the real thrill: how she should act her part.

Ursula was deeply and passionately in love with Birkin, and she was capable of nothing. She was perfectly callous about all the talk of the accident, but her estranged air looked like trouble. She merely sat by herself, whenever she could, and longed to see him again. She wanted him to come to the house,—she would not have it otherwise, he must come at Chapter 15.

once. She was waiting for him. She stayed indoors all day, Sunday evening.

waiting for him to knock at the door. Every minute, she glanced

automatically at the window. He would be there.

As the day wore on, the life-blood seemed to ebb away from Ursula, and within the emptiness a heavy despair gathered. Her passion seemed to bleed to death, and there was nothing. She sat suspended in a state of complete nullity, harder to bear than death.

'Unless something happens,' she said to herself, in the perfect lucidity of final suffering, 'I shall die. I am at the end of my line of life.'

She sat crushed and obliterated in a darkness that was the border of death. She realised how all her life she had been drawing nearer and nearer to this brink, where there was no beyond, from which one had to leap like Sappho into the unknown. The knowledge of the imminence of death was like **Contents**



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a drug. Darkly, without thinking at all, she knew that she was should he fear the next but one? Why ask about the next but near to death. She had travelled all her life along the line of one? Of the next step we are certain. It is the step into death.

fulfilment, and it was nearly concluded. She knew all she had

'I shall die—I shall quickly die,' said Ursula to herself, to know, she had experienced all she had to experience, she clear as if in a trance, clear, calm, and certain beyond human was fulfilled in a kind of bitter ripeness, there

remained only certainty. But somewhere behind, in the twilight, there was a to fall from the tree into death. And one must fulfil one's bitter weeping and a hopelessness. That must not be attended development to the end, must carry the adventure to its conto. One must go where the unfaltering spirit goes, there must clusion. And the next step was over the border into death. So be no baulking the issue, because of fear. No baulking the it was then! There was a certain peace in the knowledge.

issue, no listening to the lesser voices. If the deepest desire be After all, when one was fulfilled, one was happiest in fall-now, to go on into the unknown of death, shall one forfeit the ing into death, as a bitter fruit plunges in its ripeness down-deepest truth for one more shallow?

wards. Death is a great consummation, a consummating ex-

'Then let it end,' she said to herself. It was a decision. It perience. It is a development from life. That we know, while was not a question of taking one's life—she would NEVER

we are yet living. What then need we think for further? One kill herself, that was repulsive and violent. It was a question of can never see beyond the consummation. It is enough that KNOWING the next step. And the next step led into the death is a great and conclusive experience. Why should we space of death. Did it?—or was there—?

ask what comes after the experience, when the experience is Her thoughts drifted into unconsciousness, she sat as if still unknown to us? Let us die, since the great experience is asleep beside the fire. And then the thought came back. The the one that follows now upon all the rest, death, which is the space o' death! Could she give herself to it? Ah yes—it was a next great crisis in front of which we have arrived. If we wait, sleep. She had had enough So long she had held out; and if we baulk the issue, we do but hang about the gates in un-resisted. Now was the time to relinquish, not to resist any dignified uneasiness. There it is, in front of us, as in front of more.

Sappho, the illimitable space. Thereinto goes the journey. Have In a kind of spiritual trance, she yielded, she gave way, and we not the courage to go on with our journey, must we cry 'I all was dark. She could feel, within the

darkness, the terrible daren't'? On ahead we will go, into death, and whatever death assertion of her body, the unutterable anguish of dissolution, may mean. If a man can see the next step to be taken, why the only anguish that is too much, the far-off, awful nausea **Contents**



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of dissolution set in within the body.

now! How much cleaner and more dignified to be dead! One

'Does the body correspond so immediately with the spirit?'

could not bear any more of this shame of sordid routine and she asked herself. And she knew, with the clarity of ultimate mechanical nullity. One might come to fruit in death. She knowledge, that the body is only one of the manifestations of had had enough. For where was life to be found? No flowers the spirit, the transmutation of the integral spirit is the trans-grow upon busy machinery, there is no sky to a routine, there mutation of the physical body as well. Unless I set my will, is no space to a rotary motion. And all life was a rotary mo-unless I absolve myself from the rhythm of life, fix myself tion, mechanised, cut off from reality. There was nothing to and remain static, cut off from living, absolved within my look for from life—it was the same in all countries and all own will. But better die than live mechanically a life that is a peoples. The only window was death. One could look out on repetition of repetitions. To die is to move on with the invis-to the great dark sky of death with elation, as one had looked ible. To die is also a joy, a joy of submitting to that which is out of the classroom window as a

child, and seen perfect free-greater than the known, namely, the pure unknown. That is a dom in the outside. Now one was not a child, and one knew joy. But to live mechanised and cut off within the motion of that the soul was a prisoner within this sordid vast edifice of the will, to live as an entity absolved from the unknown, that life, and there was no escape, save in death.

is shameful and ignominious. There is no ignominy in death.

But what a joy! What a gladness to think that whatever There is complete ignominy in an unreplenished, mechanised humanity did, it could not seize hold of the kingdom of death, life. Life indeed may be ignominious, shameful to the soul.

to nullify that. The sea they turned into a murderous alley But death is never a shame. Death itself, like the illimitable and a soiled road of commerce, disputed like the dirty land of space, is beyond our sullying.

a city every inch of it. The air they claimed too, shared it up, Tomorrow was Monday. Monday, the beginning of an-parcelled it out to certain owners, they trespassed in the air to other school-week! Another shameful, barren school-week, fight for it. Everything was gone, walled in, with spikes on mere routine and mechanical activity. Was not the adventure top of the walls, and one must ignominiously creep between of death infinitely preferable? Was not death infinitely more the spiky walls through a labyrinth of life.

lovely and noble than such a life? A life of barren routine, But the great, dark, illimitable kingdom of death, there without inner meaning, without any real significance. How humanity was put to scorn. So much they could do upon sordid life was, how it was a terrible shame to the soul, to live earth, the multifarious little gods that they were. But the king-

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dom of death put them all to scorn, they dwindled into their

'I know. Don't be silly,' she replied. She too was startled, true vulgar silliness in face of it.

almost frightened. She dared hardly go to the door.

How beautiful, how grand and perfect death was, how Birkin stood on the threshold, his raincoat turned up to good to look forward to. There one would wash off all the lies his ears. He had come now, now she was gone far away. She and ignominy and dirt that had been put upon one here, a was aware of the rainy night behind him.

perfect bath of cleanness and glad refreshment, and go un-

'Oh is it you?' she said.

known, unquestioned, unabased. After all, one was rich, if

'I am glad you are at home,' he said in a low voice, entering only in the promise of perfect death. It was a gladness above the house.

all, that this remained to look forward to, the pure inhuman

'They are all gone to church.'

otherness of death.

He took off his coat and hung it up. The children were Whatever life might be, it could not take away death, the peeping at him round the corner. inhuman transcendent death. Oh, let us ask no question of it,

'Go and get undressed now, Billy and Dora,' said Ursula.

what it is or is not. To know is human, and in death we do not

'Mother will be back soon, and she'll be disappointed if you're know, we are not human. And the joy of this compensates for not in bed.'

all the bitterness of knowledge and the sordidness of our hu-The children, in a sudden angelic mood, retired without a manity. In death we shall not be human, and we shall not word. Birkin and Ursula went into the drawingroom.

know. The promise of this is our heritage, we look forward The fire burned low. He looked at her and wondered at like heirs to their majority.

the luminous delicacy of her beauty, and the wide shining of Ursula sat quite still and quite forgotten, alone by the fire her eyes. He watched from a distance, with wonder in his in the drawing-room. The children were playing in the kitchen, heart, she seemed transfigured with light.

all the others were gone to church. And she was gone into the

'What have you been doing all day?' he asked her.

ultimate darkness of her own soul.

'Only sitting about,' she said.

She was startled by hearing the bell ring, away in the He looked at her. There was a change in her. But she was kitchen, the children came scudding along the passage in de-separate from him. She remained apart, in a kind of bright-licious alarm.

ness. They both sat silent in the soft light of the lamp. He felt

'Ursula, there's somebody.'

he ought to go away again, he ought not to have come. Still he

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did not gather enough resolution to move. But he was DE

grave angel looking down to him.

TROP, her mood was absent and separate.

'Are you going to be kissed?' Ursula broke in, speaking to Then there came the voices of the two children calling the little girl. But Dora edged away like a tiny Dryad that shyly outside the door, softly, with self-excited timidity: will not be touched.

'Ursula! Ursula!'

'Won't you say good-night to Mr Birkin? Go, he's waiting She rose and opened the door. On the threshold stood the for you,' said Ursula. But the girl-child only made a little two children in their long nightgowns, with wide-eyed, an-motion away from him.

gelic faces. They were being very good for the moment, play-

'Silly Dora, silly Dora!' said Ursula.

ing the role perfectly of two obedient children.

Birkin felt some mistrust and antagonism in the small child.

'Shall you take us to bed!' said Billy, in a loud whisper.

He could not understand it.

'Why you ARE angels tonight,' she said softly. 'Won't

'Come then,' said Ursula. 'Let us go before mother comes.'

you come and say good-night to Mr Birkin?'

'Who'll hear us say our prayers?' asked Billy anxiously.

The children merged shyly into the room, on bare feet.

'Whom you like.'

Billy's face was wide and grinning, but there was a great so-

'Won't you?'

lemnity of being good in his round blue eyes. Dora, peeping

'Yes, I will.'

from the floss of her fair hair, hung back like some tiny Dryad,

'Ursula?'

that has no soul.

'Well Billy?'

'Will you say good-night to me?' asked Birkin, in a voice

'Is it WHOM you like?'

that was strangely soft and smooth. Dora drifted away at once,

'That's it.'

like a leaf lifted on a breath of wind. But Billy went softly

'Well what is WHOM?'

forward, slow and willing, lifting his pinched-up mouth im-

'It's the accusative of who.'

plicitly to be kissed. Ursula watched the full, gathered lips of There was a moment's contemplative silence, then the con-the man gently touch those of the boy, so gently. Then Birkin fiding:

lifted his fingers and touched the boy's round, confiding cheek,

'Is it?'

with a faint touch of love. Neither spoke. Billy seemed an-Birkin smiled to himself as he sat by the fire. When Ursula gelic like a cherub boy, or like an acolyte, Birkin was a tall, came down he sat motionless, with his arms on his knees. She **Contents**



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saw him, how he was motionless and ageless, like some crouching OUGHT to suffer, a man who takes as little notice of his idol, some image of a deathly religion. He looked round at body as that.'

her, and his face, very pale and unreal, seemed to gleam with

'—takes as little notice of his body as that,' he echoed a whiteness almost phosphorescent.

mechanically.

'Don't you feel well?' she asked, in indefinable repulsion.

This cut her short, and there was silence.

'I hadn't thought about it.'

The others came in from church, and the two had the

'But don't you know without thinking about it?'

girls to face, then the mother and Gudrun, and then the fa-He looked at her, his eyes dark and swift, and he saw her ther and the boy.

revulsion. He did not answer her question.

'Good-evening,' said Brangwen, faintly surprised. 'Came

'Don't you know whether you are unwell or not, without to see me, did you?' thinking about it?' she persisted.

'No,' said Birkin, 'not about anything, in particular, that

'Not always,' he said coldly.

is. The day was dismal, and I thought you wouldn't mind if I

'But don't you think that's very wicked?'

called in.'

'Wicked?'

'It HAS been a depressing day,' said Mrs Brangwen sym-

'Yes. I think it's CRIMINAL to have so little connection pathetically. At that moment the voices of the children were with your own body that you don't even know when you are heard calling from upstairs: 'Mother! Mother!' She lifted her ill.'

face and answered mildly into the distance: 'I shall come up He looked at her darkly.

to you in a minute, Doysie.' Then to Birkin: 'There is noth-

'Yes,' he said.

ing fresh at Shortlands, I suppose? Ah,' she sighed, 'no, poor

'Why don't you stay in bed when you are seedy? You look things, I should think not.'

perfectly ghastly.'

'You've been over there today, I suppose?' asked the father.

'Offensively so?' he asked ironically.

'Gerald came round to tea with me, and I walked back

'Yes, quite offensive. Quite repelling.'

with him. The house is overexcited and unwholesome, I

'Ah!! Well that's unfortunate.'

thought.'

'And it's raining, and it's a horrible night. Really, you

'I should think they were people who hadn't much re-shouldn't be forgiven for treating your body like it—you straint,' said Gudrun.

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'Or too much,' Birkin answered.

fore, it seemed to throw her out of the world into some ter-

'Oh yes, I'm sure,' said Gudrun, almost vindictively, 'one rible region where nothing of her old life held good. She was or the other.'

quite lost and dazed, really dead to her own life.

'They all feel they ought to behave in some unnatural fash-It was so completely incomprehensible and irrational. She ion,' said Birkin. 'When people are in grief, they would do did not know WHY she hated him, her hate was quite ab-better to cover their faces and keep in retirement, as in the old stract. She had only realised with a shock that stunned her, days.'

that she was overcome by this pure transportation. He was

'Certainly!' cried Gudrun, flushed and inflammable. 'What the enemy, fine as a diamond, and as hard and jewel-like, the can be worse than this public grief—what is more horrible, quintessence of all that was inimical.

more false! If GRIEF is not private, and hidden, what is?'

She thought of his face, white and purely wrought, and of

'Exactly,' he said. 'I felt ashamed when I was there and his eyes that had such a dark, constant will of assertion, and they were all going about in a lugubrious false way, feeling she touched her own forehead, to feel if she were mad, she they must not be natural or ordinary.'

was so transfigured in white flame of essential hate.

'Well—' said Mrs Brangwen, offended at this criticism, 'it It was not temporal, her hatred, she did not hate him for isn't so easy to bear a trouble like that.'

this or for that; she did not want to do anything to him, to And she went upstairs to the children.

have any connection with him. Her relation was ultimate and He remained only a few minutes longer, then took his leave.

utterly beyond words, the hate was so pure and gemlike. It When he was gone Ursula felt such a poignant hatred of him, was as if he were a beam of essential enmity, a beam of light that all her brain seemed turned into a sharp crystal of fine that did not only destroy her, but denied her altogether, rehatred. Her whole nature seemed sharpened and intensified voked her whole world. She saw him as a clear stroke of utter-into a pure dart of hate. She could not imagine what it was. It most contradiction, a strange gemlike being whose existence merely took hold of her, the most poignant and ultimate hadefined her own non-existence. When she heard he was ill tred, pure and clear and beyond thought. She could not think again, her hatred only intensified itself a few degrees, if that of it at all, she was translated beyond herself. It was like a were possible. It stunned her and annihilated her, but she possession. She felt she was possessed. And for several days could not escape it. She could not escape this transfiguration she went about possessed by this exquisite force of hatred of hatred that had come upon her.

against him. It surpassed anything she had ever known be-

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mestic and connubial satisfaction, was repulsive. He wanted something clearer, more open, cooler, as it were. The hot narrow intimacy between man and wife was abhorrent. The way they shut their doors, these married people, and shut themselves in to their own exclusive alliance with each other, even in love, disgusted him. It was a whole community of mistrustful couples insulated in private houses or private rooms, always in couples, and no further life, no further immediate, no disinterested relationship admitted: a kaleidoscope of Chapter 16.

couples, disjoined, separatist, meaningless entities of married couples. True, he hated promiscuity even worse than mar-Man to man.

riage, and a liaison was only another kind of coupling, reac-tionary from the legal marriage. Reaction was a greater bore He lay sick and unmoved, in pure opposition to every-than action.

thing. He knew how near to breaking was the vessel that held On the whole, he hated sex, it was such a limitation. It his life. He knew also how strong and durable it was. And he was sex that turned a man into a broken half of a couple, the did not care. Better a thousand times take one's chance with woman into the other broken half. And he wanted to be single death, than accept a life one did not want. But best of all to in himself, the woman single in herself. He wanted sex to persist and persist and persist for ever, till one were satisfied revert to the level of the other appetites, to be regarded as a in life.

functional process, not as a fulfilment. He believed in sex He knew that Ursula was referred back to him. He knew marriage. But beyond this, he wanted a further conjunction, his life rested with her. But he would rather not live than where man had being and woman had being, two pure be-accept the love she proffered. The old way of love seemed a ings, each constituting the freedom of the other, balancing dreadful bondage, a sort of conscription. What it was in him each other like two poles of one force, like two angels, or two he did not know, but the thought of love, marriage, and chil-demons.

dren, and a life lived together, in the horrible privacy of do-He wanted so much to be free, not under the compulsion

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of any need for unification, or tortured by unsatisfied desire.

suffering and humility she bound her son with chains, she Desire and aspiration should find their object without all this held him her everlasting prisoner.

torture, as now, in a world of plenty of water, simple thirst is And Ursula, Ursula was the same—or the inverse. She too inconsiderable, satisfied almost unconsciously. And he wanted was the awful, arrogant queen of life, as if she were a queen to be with Ursula as free as with himself, single and clear and bee on whom all the rest depended. He saw the yellow flare cool, yet balanced, polarised with her. The merging, the clutchin her eyes, he knew the

unthinkable overweening assump-ing, the mingling of love was become madly abhorrent to him.

tion of primacy in her. She was unconscious of it herself. She But it seemed to him, woman was always so horrible and was only too ready to knock her head on the ground before a clutching, she had such a lust for possession, a greed of self-man. But this was only when she was so certain of her man, importance in love. She wanted to have, to own, to control, to that she could worship him as a woman worships her own be dominant. Everything must be referred back to her, to infant, with a worship of perfect possession.

Woman, the Great Mother of everything, out of whom pro-It was intolerable, this possession at the hands of woman.

ceeded everything and to whom everything must finally be Always a man must be considered as the broken off fragment rendered up.

of a woman, and the sex was the still aching scar of the lacera-It filled him with almost insane fury, this calm assumption. Man must be added on to a woman, before he had any tion of the Magna Mater, that all was hers, because she had real place or wholeness.

borne it. Man was hers because she had borne him. A Mater And why? Why should we consider ourselves, men and Dolorosa, she had borne him, a Magna Mater, she now claimed women, as broken fragments of one whole? It is not true. We him again, soul and body, sex, meaning, and all. He had a are not broken fragments of one whole. Rather we are the horror of the Magna Mater, she was detestable.

singling away into purity and clear being, of things that were She was on a very high horse again, was woman, the Great mixed. Rather the sex is that which remains in us of the mixed, Mother. Did he not know it in Hermione. Hermione, the the unresolved. And passion is the further separating of this humble, the subservient, what was she all the while but the mixture, that which is manly being taken into the being of Mater Dolorosa, in her subservience, claiming with horrible, the man, that which is womanly passing to the woman, till insidious arrogance and female tyranny, her own again, claim-the two are clear and whole as angels, the admixture of sex in ing back

the man she had borne in suffering. By her very the highest sense surpassed, leaving two single beings **Contents**



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constellated together like two stars.

whiteness, sharp like splinters of light, his face was keen and In the old age, before sex was, we were mixed, each one a ruddy, his body seemed full of northern energy. Gerald really mixture. The process of singling into individuality resulted loved Birkin, though he never quite believed in him. Birkin into the great polarisation of sex. The womanly drew to one was too unreal;—clever, whimsical, wonderful, but not prac-side, the manly to the other. But the separation was imperfect tical enough. Gerald felt that his own understanding was much even them. And so our world-cycle passes. There is now to sounder and safer. Birkin was delightful, a wonderful spirit, come the new day, when we are beings each of us, fulfilled in but after all, not to be taken seriously, not quite to be counted difference. The man is pure man, the woman pure woman, as a man among men.

they are perfectly polarised. But there is no longer any of the

'Why are you laid up again?' he asked kindly, taking the horrible merging, mingling self-abnegation of love. There is sick man's hand. It was always Gerald who was protective, only the pure duality of polarisation, each one free from any offering the warm shelter of his physical strength.

contamination of the other. In each, the individual is primal,

'For my sins, I suppose,' Birkin said, smiling a little ironi-sex is subordinate, but perfectly polarised. Each has a single, cally.

separate being, with its own laws. The man has his pure free-

'For your sins? Yes, probably that is so. You should sin dom, the woman hers. Each acknowledges the perfection of less, and keep better in health?'

the polarised sex-circuit. Each admits the different nature in

'You'd better teach me.'

the other.

He looked at Gerald with ironic eyes.

So Birkin meditated whilst he was ill. He liked sometimes

'How are things with you?' asked Birkin.

to be ill enough to take to his bed. For then he got better very

'With me?' Gerald looked at Birkin, saw he was serious, quickly, and things came to him clear and sure.

and a warm light came into his eyes.

Whilst he was laid up, Gerald came to see him. The two

'I don't know that they're any different. I don't see how men had a deep, uneasy feeling for each other. Gerald's eyes they could be. There's nothing to change.'

were quick and restless, his whole manner tense and impa-

'I suppose you are conducting the business as successfully tient, he seemed strung up to some activity. According to as ever, and ignoring the demand of the soul.' conventionality, he wore black clothes, he looked formal, hand-

'That's it,' said Gerald. 'At least as far as the business is some and COMME IL FAUT. His hair was fair almost to concerned. I couldn't say about the soul, I'am sure.'

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'No.'

'I didn't laugh at the time, I assure you. I was never so

'Surely you don't expect me to?' laughed Gerald.

taken aback in my life.'

'No. How are the rest of your affairs progressing, apart

'And weren't you furious?'

from the business?'

'Furious? I should think I was. I'd have murdered her for

'The rest of my affairs? What are those? I couldn't say; I two pins.'

don't know what you refer to.'

'H'm!' ejaculated Birkin. 'Poor Gudrun, wouldn't she suf-

'Yes, you do,' said Birkin. 'Are you gloomy or cheerful?

fer afterwards for having given herself away!' He was hugely And what about Gudrun Brangwen?'

delighted.

'What about her?' A confused look came over Gerald.

'Would she suffer?' asked Gerald, also amused now.

'Well,' he added, 'I don't know. I can only tell you she gave Both men smiled in malice and amusement.

me a hit over the face last time I saw her.'

'Badly, I should think; seeing how selfconscious she is.'

'A hit over the face! What for?'

'She is selfconscious, is she? Then what made her do it?

'That I couldn't tell you, either.'

For I certainly think it was quite uncalled-for, and quite un-

'Really! But when?'

justified.'

'The night of the party—when Diana was drowned. She

'I suppose it was a sudden impulse.'

was driving the cattle up the hill, and I went after her—you

'Yes, but how do you account for her having such an im-remember.'

pulse? I'd done her no harm.'

'Yes, I remember. But what made her do that? You didn't Birkin shook his head.

definitely ask her for it, I suppose?'

'The Amazon suddenly came up in her, I suppose,' he

'I? No, not that I know of. I merely said to her, that it was said.

dangerous to drive those Highland bullocks—as it IS. She

'Well,' replied Gerald, 'I'd rather it had been the Orinoco.'

turned in such a way, and said—"I suppose you think I'm They both laughed at the poor joke. Gerald was thinking afraid of you and your cattle, don't you?" So I asked her "why,"

how Gudrun had said she would strike the last blow too. But and for answer she flung me a back-hander across the face.'

some reserve made him keep this back from Birkin.

Birkin laughed quickly, as if it pleased him. Gerald looked

'And you resent it?' Birkin asked.

at him, wondering, and began to laugh as well, saying:

'I don't resent it. I don't care a tinker's curse about it.' He

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was silent a moment, then he added, laughing. 'No, I'll see it

'TIMOR MORTIS CONTURBAT ME,' quoted Birkin, through, that's all. She seemed sorry afterwards.'

adding—'No, death doesn't really seem the point any more.

'Did she? You've not met since that night?'

It curiously doesn't concern one. It's like an ordinary tomor-Gerald's face clouded.

row.'

'No,' he said. 'We've been—you can imagine how it's been, Gerald looked closely at his friend. The eyes of the two since the accident.'

men met, and an unspoken understanding was exchanged.

'Yes. Is it calming down?'

Gerald narrowed his eyes, his face was cool and unscrupu-

'I don't know. It's a shock, of course. But I don't believe lous as he looked at Birkin, impersonally, with a vision that mother minds. I really don't believe she takes any notice. And ended in a point in space, strangely keen-eyed and yet blind.

what's so funny, she used to be all for the children—nothing

'If death isn't the point,' he said, in a strangely abstract, mattered, nothing whatever mattered but the children. And cold, fine voice—'what is?' He sounded as if he had been found now, she doesn't take any more notice than

if it was one of the out.

servants.'

'What is?' reechoed Birkin. And there was a mocking

'No? Did it upset YOU very much?'

silence.

'It's a shock. But I don't feel it very much, really. I don't

'There's long way to go, after the point of intrinsic death, feel any different. We've all got to die, and it doesn't seem to before we disappear,' said Birkin.

make any great difference, anyhow, whether you die or not. I

'There is,' said Gerald. 'But what sort of way?' He seemed can't feel any GRIEF you know. It leaves me cold. I can't to press the other man for knowledge which he himself knew quite account for it.'

far better than Birkin did.

'You don't care if you die or not?' asked Birkin.

'Right down the slopes of degeneration—mystic, univer-Gerald looked at him with eyes blue as the blue-fibred sal degeneration. There are many stages of pure degradation steel of a weapon. He felt awkward, but indifferent. As a matter to go through: agelong. We live on long after our death, and of fact, he did care terribly, with a great fear.

progressively, in progressive devolution.'

'Oh,' he said, 'I don't want to die, why should I? But I Gerald listened with a faint, fine smile on his face, all the never trouble. The question doesn't seem to be on the carpet time, as if, somewhere, he knew so much better than Birkin, for me at all. It doesn't interest me, you know.'

all about this: as if his own knowledge were direct and per-

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sonal, whereas Birkin's was a matter of observation and infer-nature, why do you want to make her gregarious?'

ence, not quite hitting the nail on the head:—though aiming

'No, I don't want to make her anything. But I think school near enough at it. But he was not going to give himself away.

would be good for her.'

If Birkin could get at the secrets, let him. Gerald would never

'Was it good for you?'

help him. Gerald would be a dark horse to the end.

Gerald's eyes narrowed uglily. School had been torture to

'Of course,' he said, with a startling change of conversa-him. Yet he had not questioned whether one should go through tion, 'it is father who really feels it. It will finish him. For him this torture. He seemed to believe in education through sub-the world collapses. All his care now is for Winnie—he must jection and torment.

save Winnie. He says she ought to be sent away to school, but

'I hated it at the time, but I can see it was necessary,' he she won't hear of it, and he'll never do it. Of course she IS in said. 'It brought me into line a bit—and you can't live unless rather a queer way. We're all of us curiously bad at living. We you do come into line somewhere.'

can do things—but we can't get on with life at all. It's curi-

'Well,' said Birkin, 'I begin to think that you can't live ous—a family failing.'

unless you keep entirely out of the line. It's no good trying to

'She oughtn't to be sent away to school,' said Birkin, who toe the line, when your one impulse is to smash up the line.

was considering a new proposition.

Winnie is a special nature, and for special natures you must

'She oughtn't. Why?'

give a special world.'

'She's a queer child—a special child, more special even than

'Yes, but where's your special world?' said Gerald.

you. And in my opinion special children should never be sent

'Make it. Instead of chopping yourself down to fit the away to school. Only moderately ordinary children should be world, chop the world down to fit yourself. As a matter of sent to school—so it seems to me.'

fact, two exceptional people make another world. You and I,

'I'm inclined to think just the opposite. I think it would we make another, separate world. You don't WANT a world probably make her more normal if she went away and mixed same as your brothers-in-law. It's just the special

quality you with other children.'

value. Do you WANT to be normal or ordinary! It's a lie.

'She wouldn't mix, you see. YOU never really mixed, did You want to be free and extraordinary, in an extraordinary you? And she wouldn't be willing even to pretend to. She's world of liberty.'

proud, and solitary, and naturally apart. If she has a single Gerald looked at Birkin with subtle eyes of knowledge.

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But he would never openly admit what he felt. He knew more part, to talk so deeply and importantly.

than Birkin, in one direction—much more. And this gave Quite other things were going through Birkin's mind.

him his gentle love for the other man, as if Birkin were in Suddenly he saw himself confronted with another problem—

some way young, innocent, childlike: so amazingly clever, the problem of love and eternal conjunction between two men.

but incurably innocent.

Of course this was necessary—it had been a necessity inside

'Yet you are so banal as to consider me chiefly a freak,' said himself all his life—to love a man purely and fully. Of course Birkin pointedly.

he had been loving Gerald all along, and all along denying it.

'A freak!' exclaimed Gerald, startled. And his face opened He lay in the bed and wondered, whilst his friend sat be-suddenly, as if lighted with simplicity, as when a flower opens side him, lost in brooding. Each man was gone in his own out of the cunning bud. 'No—I never consider you a freak.'

thoughts.

And he watched the other man with strange eyes, that Birkin

'You know how the old German knights used to swear a could not understand. 'I feel,' Gerald continued, 'that there is BLUTBRUDERSCHAFT,' he said to Gerald, with quite a always an element of uncertainty about you—perhaps you new happy activity in his eyes.

are uncertain about yourself. But I'm never sure of you. You

'Make a little wound in their arms, and rub each other's can go away and change as easily as if you had no soul.'

blood into the cut?' said Gerald.

He looked at Birkin with penetrating eyes. Birkin was

'Yes—and swear to be true to each other, of one blood, all amazed. He thought he had all the soul in the world. He their lives. That is what we ought to do. No wounds, that is stared in amazement. And Gerald, watching, saw the amaz-obsolete. But we ought to swear to love each other, you and I, ing attractive goodliness of his eyes, a young, spontaneous implicitly, and perfectly, finally, without any possibility of goodness that attracted the other man infinitely, yet filled going back on it.'

him with bitter chagrin, because he mistrusted it so much.

He looked at Gerald with clear, happy eyes of discovery.

He knew Birkin could do without him—could forget, and Gerald looked down at him, attracted, so deeply bondaged in not suffer. This was always present in Gerald's consciousness, fascinated attraction, that he was mistrustful, resenting the filling him with bitter unbelief: this consciousness of the bondage, hating the attraction.

young, animal-like spontaneity of detachment. It seemed al-

'We will swear to each other, one day, shall we?' pleaded most like hypocrisy and lying, sometimes, oh, often, on Birkin's Birkin. 'We will swear to stand by each other—be true to

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each other—ultimately— infallibly—given to each other, or-Birkin in Gerald. Gerald could never fly away from himself, ganically—without possibility of taking back.'

in real indifferent gaiety. He had a clog, a sort of monomania.

Birkin sought hard to express himself. But Gerald hardly There was silence for a time. Then Birkin said, in a lighter listened. His face shone with a certain luminous pleasure. He tone, letting the stress of the contact pass: was pleased. But he kept his reserve. He held himself back.

'Can't you get a good governess for Winifred?—somebody

'Shall we swear to each other, one day?' said Birkin, put-exceptional?'

ting out his hand towards Gerald.

'Hermione Roddice suggested we should ask Gudrun to Gerald just touched the extended fine, living hand, as if teach her to draw and to model in clay. You know Winnie is withheld and afraid.

astonishingly clever with that plasticine stuff. Hermione de-

'We'll leave it till I understand it better,' he said, in a voice clares she is an artist.' Gerald spoke in the usual animated, of excuse.

chatty manner, as if nothing unusual had passed. But Birkin's Birkin watched him. A little sharp disappointment, per-manner was full of reminder.

haps a touch of contempt came into his heart.

'Really! I didn't know that. Oh well then, if Gudrun

'Yes,' he said. 'You must tell me what you think, later. You WOULD teach her, it would be perfect—couldn't be any-know what I mean? Not sloppy emotionalism. An imper-thing better—if Winifred is an artist. Because Gudrun some-sonal union that leaves one free.'

where is one. And every true artist is the salvation of every They lapsed both into silence. Birkin was looking at Gerald other.'

all the time. He seemed now to see, not the physical, animal

'I thought they got on so badly, as a rule.'

man, which he usually saw in Gerald, and which usually he

'Perhaps. But only artists produce for each other the world liked so much, but the man himself, complete, and as if fated, that is fit to live in. If you can arrange THAT for Winifred, doomed, limited. This strange sense of fatality in Gerald, as if it is perfect.'

he were limited to one form of existence, one knowledge, one

'But you think she wouldn't come?'

activity, a sort of fatal halfness, which to himself seemed whole-

'I don't know. Gudrun is rather self-opinionated. She won't ness, always overcame Birkin after their moments of passion-go cheap anywhere. Or if she does, she'll pretty soon take ate approach, and filled him with a sort of contempt, or bore-herself back. So whether she would condescend to do private dom. It was the insistence on the limitation which so bored teaching, particularly here, in Beldover, I don't know. But it **Contents**



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would be just the thing. Winifred has got a special nature.

'I don't see what she has to distinguish between teaching And if you can put into her way the means of being self-at the Grammar School, and coming to teach Win,' said sufficient, that is the best thing possible. She'll never get on Gerald.

with the ordinary life. You find it difficult enough yourself,

'The difference between a public servant and a private and she is several skins thinner than you are. It is awful to one. The only nobleman today, king

and only aristocrat, is the think what her life will be like unless she does find a means of public, the public. You are quite willing to serve the public—expression, some way of fulfilment. You can see what mere but to be a private tutor—'

leaving it to fate brings. You can see how much marriage is to

'I don't want to serve either—'

be trusted to—look at your own mother.'

'No! And Gudrun will probably feel the same.'

'Do you think mother is abnormal?'

Gerald thought for a few minutes. Then he said:

'No! I think she only wanted something more, or other

'At all events, father won't make her feel like a private ser-than the common run of life. And not getting it, she has gone vant. He will be fussy and greatful enough.'

wrong perhaps.'

'So he ought. And so ought all of you. Do you think you

'After producing a brood of wrong children,' said Gerald can hire a woman like Gudrun Brangwen with money? She is gloomily.

your equal like anything—probably your superior.'

'No more wrong than any of the rest of us,' Birkin replied.

'Is she?' said Gerald.

'The most normal people have the worst subterranean selves,

'Yes, and if you haven't the guts to know it, I hope she'll take them one by

one.'

leave you to your own devices.'

'Sometimes I think it is a curse to be alive,' said Gerald

'Nevertheless,' said Gerald, 'if she is my equal, I wish she with sudden impotent anger.

weren't a teacher, because I don't think teachers as a rule are

'Well,' said Birkin, 'why not! Let it be a curse sometimes my equal.'

to be alive—at other times it is anything but a curse. You've

'Nor do I, damn them. But am I a teacher because I teach, got plenty of zest in it really.'

or a parson because I preach?'

'Less than you'd think,' said Gerald, revealing a strange Gerald laughed. He was always uneasy on this score. He poverty in his look at the other man.

did not WANT to claim social superiority, yet he WOULD

There was silence, each thinking his own thoughts.

not claim intrinsic personal superiority, because he would never

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base his standard of values on pure being. So he wobbled

'So,' said Birkin. 'Good-bye.' And he reached out his hand upon a tacit assumption of social standing. No, Birkin wanted from under the bed-clothes, smiling with a glimmering look.

him to accept the fact of intrinsic difference between human

'Good-bye,' said Gerald, taking the warm hand of his friend beings, which he did not intend to accept. It was against his in a firm grasp. 'I shall come again. I miss you down at the social honour, his principle. He rose to go.

mill.'

'I've been neglecting my business all this while,' he said

'I'll be there in a few days,' said Birkin.

smiling.

The eyes of the two men met again. Gerald's, that were

'I ought to have reminded you before,' Birkin replied, keen as a hawk's, were suffused now with warm light and with laughing and mocking.

unadmitted love, Birkin looked back as out of a darkness,

'I knew you'd say something like that,' laughed Gerald, unsounded and unknown, yet with a kind of warmth, that rather uneasily.

seemed to flow over Gerald's brain like a fertile sleep.

'Did you?'

'Good-bye then. There's nothing I can do for you?'

'Yes, Rupert. It wouldn't do for us all to be like you are—

'Nothing, thanks.'

we should soon be in the cart. When I am above the world, I Birkin watched the black-clothed form of the other man shall ignore all businesses.'

move out of the door, the bright head was gone, he turned

'Of course, we're not in the cart now,' said Birkin, satiri-over to sleep.

cally.

'Not as much as you make out. At any rate, we have enough to eat and drink ___'

'And be satisfied,' added Birkin.

Gerald came near the bed and stood looking down at Birkin whose throat was exposed, whose tossed hair fell attractively on the warm brow, above the eyes that were so unchallenged and still in the satirical face. Gerald, full-limbed and turgid with energy, stood unwilling to go, he was held by the presence of the other man. He had not the power to go away.

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casual acquaintance with him.

She had a scheme for going to St Petersburg, where she had a friend who was a sculptor like herself, and who lived with a wealthy Russian whose hobby was jewel-making. The emotional, rather rootless life of the Russians appealed to her.

She did not want to go to Paris. Paris was dry, and essentially boring. She would like to go to Rome, Munich, Vienna, or to St Petersburg or Moscow. She had a friend in St Petersburg and a friend in Munich. To each of these she wrote, asking Chapter 17.

about rooms.

She had a certain amount of money. She had come home *The industrial magnate*.

partly to save, and now she had sold several pieces of work, she had been praised in various shows. She knew she could be-In Beldover, there was both for Ursula and for Gudrun an come quite the 'go' if she went to London. But she knew interval. It seemed to Ursula as if Birkin had gone out of her London, she wanted something else. She had seventy pounds, for the time, he had lost his significance, he scarcely mattered of which nobody knew anything. She would move soon, as in her world. She had her own friends, her own activities, her soon as she heard from her friends. Her nature, in spite of her own life. She turned back to the old ways with zest, away apparent placidity and calm, was profoundly restless.

from him.

The sisters happened to call in a cottage in Willey Green And Gudrun, after feeling every moment in all her veins to buy honey. Mrs Kirk, a stout, pale, sharp-nosed woman, conscious of Gerald Crich, connected even physically with sly, honied, with something shrewish and cat-like beneath, him, was now almost indifferent to the thought of him. She asked the girls into her toocosy, too tidy kitchen. There was a was nursing new schemes for going away and trying a new cat-like comfort and cleanliness everywhere.

form of life. All the time, there was something in her urging

'Yes, Miss Brangwen,' she said, in her slightly whining, her to avoid the final establishing of a relationship with Gerald.

insinuating voice, 'and how do you like being back in the old She felt it would be wiser and better to have no more than a place, then?'

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Gudrun, whom she addressed, hated her at once.

'In many ways.' Mrs Krik lowered her voice a little. 'She

'I don't care for it,' she replied abruptly.

was a proud haughty lady when she came into these parts—

'You don't? Ay, well, I suppose you found a difference from my word, she was that! She mustn't be looked at, and it was London. You like life, and big, grand places. Some of us has worth your life to speak to her.' The woman made a dry, sly to be content with Willey Green and Beldover. And what do face.

you think of our Grammar School, as there's so much talk

'Did you know her when she was first married?'

about?'

'Yes, I knew her. I nursed three of her children. And proper

'What do I think of it?' Gudrun looked round at her slowly.

little terrors they were, little fiends—that Gerald was a de-

'Do you mean, do I think it's a good school?'

mon if ever there was one, a proper demon, ay, at six months

'Yes. What is your opinion of it?'

old.' A curious malicious, sly tone came into the woman's voice.

'I DO think it's a good school.'

'Really,' said Gudrun.

Gudrun was very cold and repelling. She knew the com-

'That wilful, masterful—he'd mastered one nurse at six mon people hated the school.

months. Kick, and scream, and struggle like a demon. Many's

'Ay, you do, then! I've heard so much, one way and the time I've pinched his little bottom for him, when he was other. It's nice to know what those that's in it feel. But opin-a child in arms. Ay, and he'd have been better if he'd had it ions vary, don't they? Mr Crich up at Highclose is all for it.

pinched oftener. But she wouldn't have them corrected—no-Ay, poor man, I'm afraid he's not long for this world. He's o, wouldn't hear of it. I can remember the rows she had with very poorly.'

Mr Crich, my word. When he'd got worked up, properly

'Is he worse?' asked Ursula.

worked up till he could stand no more, he'd lock the study

'Eh, yes—since they lost Miss Diana. He's gone off to a door and whip them. But she paced up and down all the shadow. Poor man, he's had a world of trouble.'

while like a tiger outside, like a tiger, with very murder in her

'Has he?' asked Gudrun, faintly ironic.

face. She had a face that could LOOK death. And when the

'He has, a world of trouble. And as nice and kind a gentle-door was opened, she'd go in with her hands lifted—"What man as ever you could wish to meet. His children don't take have you been doing to MY children, you coward." She was after him.'

like one out of her mind. I believe he was frightened of her;

'I suppose they take after their mother?' said Ursula.

he had to be driven mad before he'd lift a finger. Didn't the

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servants have a life of it! And didn't we used to be thankful loathed herself for the thought.

when one of them caught it. They were the torment of your But at Shortlands the life-long struggle was coming to a life.'

close. The father was ill and was going to die. He had bad

'Really!' said Gudrun.

internal pains, which took away all his attentive life, and left

'In every possible way. If you wouldn't let them smash him with only a vestige of his consciousness. More and more their pots on the table, if you wouldn't let them drag the a silence came over him, he was less and less acutely aware of kitten about with a string round its neck, if you wouldn't give his surroundings. The pain seemed to absorb his activity. He them whatever they asked for, every mortal thing—then there knew it was there, he knew it would come again. It was like was a shine on, and their mother coming in asking—"What's something lurking in the darkness within him. And he had the matter with him? What have you done to him? What is not the power, or the will, to seek it out and to know it. There it, Darling?" And then she'd turn on you as if she'd trample it remained in the darkness, the great pain, tearing him at you under her feet. But she didn't trample on me. I was the times, and then being silent. And when it tore him he crouched only one that could do anything with her demons—for she in silent subjection under it, and when it left him alone again, wasn't going to be bothered with them herself. No, SHE took he refused to know of it. It was within the darkness, let it no trouble for them. But they must just have their way, they remain unknown. So he never admitted it, except in a secret mustn't be spoken to. And Master Gerald was the beauty. I corner of himself, where all his never-revealed fears and se-left when he was a year and a half, I could stand no more. But crets were accumulated. For the rest, he had a pain, it went I pinched his little bottom for him when he was in arms, I away, it made no difference. It even stimulated him, excited did, when there was no holding him, and I'm not sorry I him.

did—'

But it gradually absorbed his life. Gradually it drew away Gudrun went away

in fury and loathing. The phrase, 'I all his potentiality, it bled him into the dark, it weaned him pinched his little bottom for him,' sent her into a white, stony of life and drew him away into the darkness. And in this fury. She could not bear it, she wanted to have the woman twilight of his life little remained visible to him. The busi-taken out at once and strangled. And yet there the phrase was ness, his work, that was gone entirely. His public interests had lodged in her mind for ever, beyond escape. She felt, one day, disappeared as if they had never been. Even his family had she would HAVE to tell him, to see how he took it. And she become extraneous to him, he could only remember, in some **Contents**



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slight non-essential part of himself, that such and such were wards her. All his life, he had said: 'Poor Christiana, she has his children. But it was historical fact, not vital to him. He such a strong temper.' With unbroken will, he had stood by had to make an effort to know their relation to him. Even his this position with regard to her, he had substituted pity for wife barely existed. She indeed was like the darkness, like the all his hostility, pity had been his shield and his safeguard, pain within him. By some strange association, the darkness and his infallible weapon. And still, in his consciousness, he that contained the pain and the darkness that contained his was sorry for her, her nature was so violent and so impatient.

wife were identical. All his thoughts and understandings be-But now his pity, with his life, was wearing thin, and the came blurred and fused, and now his wife and the consuming dread almost amounting to horror, was rising into

being. But pain were the same dark secret power against him, that he before the armour of his pity really broke, he would die, as an never faced. He never drove the dread out of its lair within insect when its shell is cracked. This was his final resource.

him. He only knew that there was a dark place, and some-Others would live on, and know the living death, the ensuing thing inhabiting this darkness which issued from time to time process of hopeless chaos. He would not. He denied death its and rent him. But he dared not penetrate and drive the beast victory.

into the open. He had rather ignore its existence. Only, in his He had been so constant to his lights, so constant to char-vague way, the dread was his wife, the destroyer, and it was ity, and to his love for his neighbour. Perhaps he had loved his the pain, the destruction, a darkness which was one and both.

neighbour even better than himself—which is going one fur-He very rarely saw his wife. She kept her room. Only oc-ther than the commandment. Always, this flame had burned casionally she came forth, with her head stretched forward, in his heart, sustaining him through everything, the welfare and in her low, possessed voice, she asked him how he was.

of the people. He was a large employer of labour, he was a And he answered her, in the habit of more than thirty years: great mine-owner. And he had never lost this from his heart,

'Well, I don't think I'm any the worse, dear.' But he was fright-that in Christ he was one with his workmen. Nay, he had felt ened of her, underneath this safeguard of habit, frightened inferior to them, as if they through poverty and labour were almost to the verge of death.

nearer to God than he. He had always the unacknowledged But all his life, he had been so constant to his lights, he belief, that it was his workmen, the miners, who held in their had never broken down. He would die even now without hands the means of salvation. To move nearer to God, he must breaking down, without knowing what his feelings were, to-move towards his miners, his life must gravitate towards theirs.

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They were, unconsciously, his idol, his God made manifest.

lugubriously up the drive to the door. She wanted to set the In them he worshipped the highest, the great, sympathetic, dogs on them, 'Hi Rip! Hi Ring! Ranger! At 'em boys, set mindless Godhead of humanity.

'em off.' But Crowther, the butler, with all the rest of the And all the while, his wife had opposed him like one of servants, was Mr Crich's man. Nevertheless, when her hus-the great demons of hell. Strange, like a bird of prey, with the band was away, she would come down like a wolf on the crawl-fascinating beauty and abstraction of a hawk, she had beat ing supplicants; against the bars of his philanthropy, and like a hawk in a cage,

'What do you people want? There is nothing for you here.

she had sunk into silence. By force of circumstance, because You have no business on the drive at all. Simpson, drive them all the world combined to make the cage unbreakable, he had away and let no more of them through the gate.'

been too strong for her, he had kept her prisoner. And be-The servants had to obey her. And she would stand watch-cause she was his prisoner, his passion for her had always re-ing with an eye like the eagle's, whilst the groom in clumsy mained keen as death. He had always loved her, loved her confusion

drove the lugubrious persons down the drive, as if with intensity. Within the cage, she was denied nothing, she they were rusty fowls, scuttling before him.

was given all licence.

But they learned to know, from the lodge-keeper, when But she had gone almost mad. Of wild and overweening Mrs Crich was away, and they timed their visits. How many temper, she could not bear the humiliation of her husband's times, in the first years, would Crowther knock softly at the soft, half-appealing kindness to everybody. He was not de-door: 'Person to see you, sir.'

ceived by the poor. He knew they came and sponged on him,

'What name?'

and whined to him, the worse sort; the majority, luckily for

'Grocock, sir.'

him, were much too proud to ask for anything, much too

'What do they want?' The question was half impatient, independent to come knocking at his door. But in Beldover, half gratified. He liked hearing appeals to his charity.

as everywhere else, there were the whining, parasitic, foul hu-

'About a child, sir.'

man beings who come crawling after charity, and feeding on

'Show them into the library, and tell them they shouldn't the living body of the public like lice. A kind of fire would go come after eleven o'clock in the morning.'

over Christiana Crich's brain, as she saw two more pale-faced,

'Why do you get up from dinner?—send them off,' his creeping women in objectionable black clothes, cringing wife would say abruptly.

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'Oh, I can't do that. It's no trouble just to hear what they It seemed to her he was never satisfied unless there was some have to say.'

sordid tale being poured out to him, which he drank in with

'How many more have been here today? Why don't you a sort of mournful, sympathetic satisfaction. He would have establish open house for them? They would soon oust me no RAISON D'ETRE if there were no lugubrious miseries and the children.'

in the world, as an undertaker would have no meaning if there

'You know dear, it doesn't hurt me to hear what they have were no funerals.

to say. And if they really are in trouble—well, it is my duty to Mrs Crich recoiled back upon herself, she recoiled away help them out of it.'

from this world of creeping democracy. A band of tight, bale-

'It's your duty to invite all the rats in the world to gnaw at ful exclusion fastened round her heart, her isolation was fierce your bones.'

and hard, her antagonism was passive but terribly pure, like

'Come, Christiana, it isn't like that. Don't be uncharitable.'

that of a hawk in a cage. As the years went on, she lost more But she suddenly swept out of the room, and out to the and more count of the world, she seemed rapt in some glitter-study. There sat the meagre charity-seekers, looking as if they ing abstraction, almost purely unconscious. She would wan-were at the doctor's.

der about the house and about the surrounding country, star-

'Mr Crich can't see you. He can't see you at this hour. Do ing keenly and seeing nothing. She rarely spoke, she had no you think he is your property, that you can come whenever connection with the world. And she did not even think. She you like? You must go away, there is nothing for you here.'

was consumed in a fierce tension of opposition, like the nega-The poor people rose in confusion. But Mr Crich, pale tive pole of a magnet.

and black-bearded and deprecating, came behind her, saying: And she bore many children. For, as time went on, she

'Yes, I don't like you coming as late as this. I'll hear any of never opposed her husband in word or deed. She took no you in the morning part of the day, but I can't really do with notice of him, externally. She submitted to him, let him take you after. What's amiss then, Gittens. How is your Missis?'

what he wanted and do as he wanted with her. She was like a

'Why, she's sunk very low, Mester Crich, she's a'most gone, hawk that sullenly submits to everything. The relation be-she is—'

tween her and her husband was wordless and unknown, but Sometimes, it seemed to Mrs Crich as if her husband were it was deep, awful, a relation of utter inter-destruction. And some subtle funeral bird, feeding on the miseries of the people.

he, who triumphed in the world, he became more and more

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hollow in his vitality, the vitality was bled from within him, scarcely anything to her. She had lost all that, she was quite as by some haemorrhage. She was hulked like a hawk in a by herself. Only Gerald, the gleaming, had some existence for cage, but her heart was fierce and undiminished within her, her. But of late years, since he had become head of the busi-though her mind was destroyed.

ness, he too was forgotten. Whereas the father, now he was So to the last he would go to her and hold her in his arms dying, turned for compassion to Gerald. There had always sometimes, before his strength was all gone. The terrible white, been opposition between the two of them. Gerald had feared destructive light that burned in her eyes only excited and and despised his father, and to a great extent had avoided him roused him. Till he was bled to death, and then he dreaded all through boyhood and young manhood. And the father her more than anything. But he always said to himself, how had felt very often a real dislike of his eldest son, which, never happy he had been, how he had loved her with a pure and wanting to give way to, he had refused to acknowledge. He consuming love ever since he had known her. And he thought had ignored Gerald as much as possible, leaving him alone.

of her as pure, chaste; the white flame which was known to Since, however, Gerald had come home and assumed re-him alone, the flame of her sex, was a white flower of snow to sponsibility in the firm, and had proved such a

wonderful his mind. She was a wonderful white snow-flower, which he director, the father, tired and weary of all outside concerns, had desired infinitely. And now he was dying with all his had put all his trust of these things in his son, implicitly, ideas and interpretations intact. They would only collapse leaving everything to him, and assuming a rather touching when the breath left his body. Till then they would be pure dependence on the young enemy. This immediately roused a truths for him. Only death would show the perfect complete-poignant pity and allegiance in Gerald's heart, always shadness of the lie. Till death, she was his white snow-flower. He owed by contempt and by unadmitted enmity. For Gerald had subdued her, and her subjugation was to him an infinite was in reaction against Charity; and yet he was dominated by chastity in her, a virginity which he could never break, and it, it assumed supremacy in the inner life, and he could not which dominated him as by a spell.

confute it. So he was partly subject to that which his father She had let go the outer world, but within herself she was stood for, but he was in reaction against it. Now he could not unbroken and unimpaired. She only sat in her room like a save himself. A certain pity and grief and tenderness for his moping, dishevelled hawk, motionless, mindless. Her chil-father overcame him, in spite of the deeper, more sullen hos-dren, for whom she had been so fierce in her youth, now meant tility.

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The father won shelter from Gerald through compassion.

the development of his illness, his craving for surety with re-But for love he had Winifred. She was his youngest child, she gard to Winifred amounted almost to obsession. It was as if, was the only one of his children whom he had ever closely even dying, he must have some anxiety, some responsibility of loved. And her he loved with all the great, overweening, shel-love, of Charity, upon his heart.

tering love of a dying man. He wanted to shelter her infi-She was an odd, sensitive, inflammable child, having her nitely, infinitely, to wrap her in warmth and love and shelter, father's dark hair and quiet bearing, but being quite detached, perfectly. If he could save her she should never know one momentaneous. She was like a changeling indeed, as if her pain, one grief, one hurt. He had been so right all his life, so feelings did not matter to her, really. She often seemed to be constant in his kindness and his goodness. And this was his talking and playing like the gayest and most childish of chil-last passionate righteousness, his love for the child Winifred.

dren, she was full of the warmest, most delightful affection Some things troubled him yet. The world had passed away for a few things—for her father, and for her animals in par-from him, as his strength ebbed. There were no more poor ticular. But if she heard that her beloved kitten Leo had been and injured and humble to protect and succour. These were run over by the motor-car she put her head on one side, and all lost to him. There were no more sons and daughters to replied, with a faint contraction like resentment on her face: trouble him, and to weigh on him as an unnatural responsi-

'Has he?' Then she took no more notice. She only disliked the bility. These too had faded out of reality All these things had servant who would force bad news on her, and wanted her to fallen out of his hands, and left him free.

be sorry. She wished not to know, and that seemed her chief There remained the covert fear and horror of his wife, as motive. She avoided her mother, and most of the members of she sat mindless and strange in her room, or as she came forth her family. She LOVED her Daddy, because he wanted her with slow, prowling step, her head bent forward. But this he always to be happy, and because he seemed to become young put away. Even his life-long righteousness, however, would again, and irresponsible in her presence. She liked Gerald, not quite deliver him from the inner horror. Still, he could

because he was so self-contained. She loved people who would keep it sufficiently at bay. It would never break forth openly.

make life a game for her. She had an amazing instinctive criti-Death would come first.

cal faculty, and was a pure anarchist, a pure aristocrat at once.

Then there was Winifred! If only he could be sure about For she accepted her equals wherever she found them, and her, if only he could be sure. Since the death of Diana, and she ignored with blithe indifference her inferiors, whether **Contents**



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they were her brothers and sisters, or whether they were wealthy filled his responsibility. And here it could be done. He did guests of the house, or whether they were the common people not hesitate to appeal to Gudrun.

or the servants. She was quite single and by herself, deriving Meanwhile, as the father drifted more and more out of from nobody. It was as if she were cut off from all purpose or life, Gerald experienced more and more a sense of exposure.

continuity, and existed simply moment by moment.

His father after all had stood for the living world to him.

The father, as by some strange final illusion, felt as if all Whilst his father lived Gerald was not responsible for the his fate depended on his ensuring to Winifred her happiness.

world. But now his father was passing away, Gerald found She who could never suffer, because she never formed vital himself left exposed and unready before the storm of living, connections, she who could lose the dearest things of her life like the mutinous first mate of a ship that has lost his captain, and be just the same the next day, the whole memory dropped and who sees only a terrible chaos in front of him. He did not out, as if deliberately, she whose will was so strangely and inherit an established order and a living idea. The whole uni-easily free, anarchistic, almost nihilistic, who like a soulless fying idea of mankind seemed to be dying with his father, the bird flits on its own will, without attachment or responsibil-centralising force that had held the whole together seemed to ity beyond the moment, who in her every motion snapped collapse with his father, the parts were ready to go asunder in the threads of serious relationship with blithe, free hands, terrible disintegration. Gerald was as if left on board of a ship really nihilistic, because never troubled, she must be the ob-that was going asunder beneath his feet, he was in charge of a ject of her father's final passionate solicitude.

vessel whose timbers were all coming apart.

When Mr Crich heard that Gudrun Brangwen might He knew that all his life he had been wrenching at the come to help Winifred with her drawing and modelling he frame of life to break it apart. And now, with something of saw a road to salvation for his child. He believed that Winifred the terror of a destructive child, he saw himself on the point had talent, he had seen Gudrun, he knew that she was an of inheriting his own destruction. And during the last months, exceptional person. He could give Winifred into her hands as under the influence of death, and of Birkin's talk, and of into the hands of a right being. Here was a direction and a Gudrun's penetrating being, he had lost entirely that me-positive force to be lent to his child, he need not leave her chanical certainty that had been his triumph. Sometimes directionless and defenceless. If he could but graft the girl on spasms of hatred came over him, against Birkin and Gudrun to some tree of utterance before he died, he would have ful-and that whole set. He wanted to go back to the dullest con-

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servatism, to the most stupid of conventional people. He so attracted him.

wanted to revert to the strictest Toryism. But the desire did The result was, he found humanity very much alike ev-not last long enough to carry him into action.

erywhere, and to a mind like his, curious and cold, the savage During his childhood and his boyhood he had wanted a was duller, less exciting than the European. So he took hold sort of savagedom. The days of Homer were his ideal, when a of all kinds of sociological ideas, and ideas of reform. But they man was chief of an army of heroes, or spent his years in never went more than skin-deep, they were never more than a wonderful Odyssey. He hated remorselessly the circumstances mental amusement. Their interest lay chiefly in the reaction of his own life, so much that he never really saw Beldover and against the positive order, the destructive reaction.

the colliery valley. He turned his face entirely away from the He discovered at last a real adventure in the coal-mines.

blackened mining region that stretched away on the right hand His father asked him to help in the firm. Gerald had been of Shortlands, he turned entirely to the country and the woods educated in the science of mining, and it had never interested beyond Willey Water. It was true that the panting and rat-him. Now, suddenly, with a sort of exultation, he laid hold of tling of the

coal mines could always be heard at Shortlands.

the world.

But from his earliest childhood, Gerald had paid no heed to There was impressed photographically on his conscious-this. He had ignored the whole of the industrial sea which ness the great industry. Suddenly, it was real, he was part of it.

surged in coal-blackened tides against the grounds of the house.

Down the valley ran the colliery railway, linking mine with The world was really a wilderness where one hunted and swam mine. Down the railway ran the trains, short trains of heavily and rode. He rebelled against all authority. Life was a condi-laden trucks, long trains of empty wagons, each one bearing tion of savage freedom.

in big white letters the initials:

Then he had been sent away to school, which was so much

'C.B.&Co.'

death to him. He refused to go to Oxford, choosing a Ger-These white letters on all the wagons he had seen since his man university. He had spent a certain time at Bonn, at Ber-first childhood, and it was as if he had never seen them, they lin, and at Frankfurt. There, a curiosity had been aroused in were so familiar, and so ignored. Now at last he saw his own his mind. He wanted to see and to know, in a curious objec-name written on the wall. Now he had a vision of power.

tive fashion, as if it were an amusement to him. Then he must So many wagons, bearing his initial, running all over the try war. Then he must travel into the savage regions that had country. He saw them as he entered London in the train, he **Contents**



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saw them at Dover. So far his power ramified. He looked at else mattered.

Beldover, at Selby, at Whatmore, at Lethley Bank, the great Everything in the world has its function, and is good or colliery villages which depended entirely on his mines. They not good in so far as it fulfils this function more or less per-were hideous and sordid, during his childhood they had been fectly. Was a miner a good miner? Then he was complete.

sores in his consciousness. And now he saw them with pride.

Was a manager a good manager? That was enough. Gerald Four raw new towns, and many ugly industrial hamlets were himself, who was responsible for all this industry, was he a crowded under his dependence. He saw the stream of miners good director? If he were, he had fulfilled his life. The rest flowing along the causeways from the mines at the end of the was by-play.

afternoon, thousands of blackened, slightly distorted human The mines were there, they were old. They were giving beings with red mouths, all moving subjugate to his will. He out, it did not pay to work the seams. There was talk of clos-pushed slowly in his motor-car through the little market-top ing down two of them. It was at this point that Gerald ar-on Friday nights in Beldover, through a solid mass of human rived on the scene.

beings that were making their purchases and doing their weekly He looked around. There lay the mines. They were old, spending. They were all subordinate to him. They were ugly obsolete. They were like old lions, no more good. He looked and uncouth, but they were his instruments. He was the God again. Pah! the mines were nothing but the clumsy efforts of of the

machine. They made way for his motor-car automati-impure minds. There they lay, abortions of a half-trained mind.

cally, slowly.

Let the idea of them be swept away. He cleared his brain of He did not care whether they made way with alacrity, or them, and thought only of the coal in the under earth. How grudgingly. He did not care what they thought of him. His much was there?

vision had suddenly crystallised. Suddenly he had conceived There was plenty of coal. The old workings could not get the pure instrumentality of mankind. There had been so much at it, that was all. Then break the neck of the old workings.

humanitarianism, so much talk of sufferings and feelings. It The coal lay there in its seams, even though the seams were was ridiculous. The sufferings and feelings of individuals did thin. There it lay, inert matter, as it had always lain, since the not matter in the least. They were mere conditions, like the beginning of time, subject to the will of man. The will of weather. What mattered was the pure instrumentality of the man was the determining factor. Man was the archgod of earth.

individual. As a man as of a knife: does it cut well? Nothing His mind was obedient to serve his will. Man's will was the

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absolute, the only absolute.

the men had been benefited in their fashion. There were few And it was his will to subjugate Matter to his own ends.

poor, and few needy. All was plenty, because the mines were The subjugation itself was the point, the fight was the be-all, good and easy to work. And the miners, in those days, finding the fruits of victory were mere results. It was not for the sake themselves richer than they might have expected, felt glad of money that Gerald took over the mines. He did not care and triumphant. They thought themselves well-off, they con-about money, fundamentally. He was neither ostentatious nor gratulated themselves on their good-fortune, they remembered luxurious, neither did he care about social position, not fi-how their fathers had starved and suffered, and they felt that nally. What he wanted was the pure fulfilment of his own better times had come. They were grateful to those others, will in the struggle with the natural conditions. His will was the pioneers, the new owners, who had opened out the pits, now, to take the coal out of the earth, profitably. The profit and let forth this stream of plenty.

was merely the condition of victory, but the victory itself lay But man is never satisfied, and so the miners, from grati-in the feat achieved. He vibrated with zest before the chal-tude to their owners, passed on to murmuring. Their suffi-lenge. Every day he was in the mines, examining, testing, he ciency decreased with knowledge, they wanted more. Why consulted experts, he gradually gathered the whole situation should the master be so out-of-all-proportion rich?

into his mind, as a general grasps the plan of his campaign.

There was a crisis when Gerald was a boy, when the Mas-Then there was need for a complete break. The mines were ters' Federation closed down the mines because the men would run on an old system, an obsolete idea. The initial idea had not accept a reduction. This lock-out had forced home the been, to obtain as much money from the earth as would make new conditions to Thomas Crich. Belonging to the Federa-the owners comfortably rich,

would allow the workmen suffi-tion, he had been compelled by his honour to close the pits cient wages and good conditions, and would increase the against his men. He, the father, the Patriarch, was forced to wealth of the country altogether. Gerald's father, following in deny the means of life to his sons, his people. He, the rich the second generation, having a sufficient fortune, had thought man who would hardly enter heaven because of his posses-only of the men. The mines, for him, were primarily great sions, must now turn upon the poor, upon those who were fields to produce bread and plenty for all the hundreds of nearer Christ than himself, those who were humble and de-human beings gathered about them. He had lived and striven spised and closer to perfection, those who were manly and with his fellow owners to benefit the men every time. And noble in their labours, and must say to them: 'Ye shall neither Contents



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labour nor eat bread.'

the passion for equality from the passion of cupidity, when It was this recognition of the state of war which really begins the fight for equality of possessions? But the God was broke his heart. He wanted his industry to be run on love.

the machine. Each man claimed equality in the Godhead of Oh, he wanted love to be the directing power even of the the great productive machine. Every man equally was part of mines. And now, from under the cloak of love, the sword was this Godhead. But somehow, somewhere, Thomas Crich knew cynically drawn, the sword of mechanical necessity.

this was false. When the machine is the Godhead, and pro-This really broke his heart. He must have the illusion and duction or work is worship, then the most mechanical mind now the illusion was destroyed. The men were not against is purest and highest, the representative of God on earth. And HIM, but they were against the masters. It was war, and willy the rest are subordinate, each according to his degree.

nilly he found himself on the wrong side, in his own con-Riots broke out, Whatmore pit-head was in flames. This science. Seething masses of miners met daily, carried away by was the pit furthest in the country, near the woods. Soldiers a new religious impulse. The idea flew through them: 'All came. From the windows of Shortlands, on that fatal day, could men are equal on earth,' and they would carry the idea to its be seen the flare of fire in the sky not far off, and now the material fulfilment. After all, is it not the teaching of Christ?

little colliery train, with the workmen's carriages which were And what is an idea, if not the germ of action in the material used to convey the miners to the distant Whatmore, was cross-world. 'All men are equal in spirit, they are all sons of God.

ing the valley full of soldiers, full of redcoats. Then there was Whence then this obvious DISQUALITY?' It was a reli-the far-off sound of firing, then the later news that the mob gious creed pushed to its material conclusion. Thomas Crich was dispersed, one man was shot dead, the fire was put out.

at least had no answer. He could but admit, according to his Gerald, who was a boy, was filled with the wildest excite-sincere tenets, that the disquality was wrong. But he could ment and delight. He longed to go with the soldiers to shoot not give up his goods, which were the stuff of disquality. So the men. But he was not allowed to go out of the lodge gates.

the men would fight for their rights. The last impulses of the At the gates were stationed sentries with guns. Gerald stood last religious passion left on earth, the passion for equality, near them in delight, whilst gangs of derisive miners strolled inspired them.

up and down the lanes, calling and jeering: Seething mobs of men marched

about, their faces lighted

'Now then, three ha'porth o'coppers, let's see thee shoot up as for holy war, with a smoke of cupidity. How disentangle thy gun.' Insults were chalked on the walls and the fences, the

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servants left.

promoter of industry, and he knew perfectly that he must And all this while Thomas Crich was breaking his heart, keep his goods and keep his authority. This was as divine a and giving away hundreds of pounds in charity. Everywhere necessity in him, as the need to give away all he possessed—there was free food, a surfeit of free food. Anybody could more divine, even, since this was the necessity he acted upon.

have bread for asking, and a loaf cost only three-ha'pence.

Yet because he did NOT act on the other ideal, it dominated Every day there was a free tea somewhere, the children had him, he was dying of chagrin because he must forfeit it. He never had so many treats in their lives. On Friday afternoon wanted to be a father of loving kindness and sacrificial begreat basketfuls of buns and cakes were taken into the schools, nevolence. The colliers shouted to him about his thousands a and great pitchers of milk, the school children had what they year. They would not be deceived.

wanted. They were sick with eating too much cake and milk.

When Gerald grew up in the ways of the world, he shifted And then it came to an end, and the men went back to the position. He did not care about the equality. The whole work. But it was never the same as before. There was a new Christian attitude of love and self-sacrifice was old hat. He situation created, a new idea reigned. Even in the machine, knew that position and authority were the right thing in the there should be equality. No part should be subordinate to world, and it was useless to cant about it. They were the right any other part: all should be equal. The instinct for chaos had thing, for the simple reason that they were functionally nec-entered. Mystic equality lies in abstraction, not in having or essary. They were not the be-all and the end-all. It was like in doing, which are processes. In function and process, one being part of a machine. He himself happened to be a con-man, one part, must of necessity be subordinate to another. It trolling, central part, the masses of men were the parts vari-is a condition of being. But the desire for chaos had risen, and ously controlled. This was merely as it happened. As well get the idea of mechanical equality was the weapon of disruption excited because a central hub drives a hundred outer wheels which should execute the will of man, the will for chaos.

or because the whole universe wheels round the sun. After all, Gerald was a boy at the time of the strike, but he longed it would be mere silliness to say that the moon and the earth to be a man, to fight the colliers. The father however was and Saturn and Jupiter and Venus have just as much right to trapped between two halftruths, and broken. He wanted to be the centre of the universe, each of them separately, as the be a pure Christian, one and equal with all men. He even sun. Such an assertion is made merely in the desire of chaos.

wanted to give away all he had, to the poor. Yet he was a great Without bothering to THINK to a conclusion, Gerald

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jumped to a conclusion. He abandoned the whole democratic-was this inhuman principle in the mechanism he wanted to equality problem as a problem of silliness. What mattered construct that inspired Gerald with an almost religious exal-was the great social productive machine. Let that work pertation. He, the man, could interpose a perfect, changeless, fectly, let it produce a sufficiency of everything, let every man godlike medium between himself and the Matter he had to be given a rational portion, greater or less according to his subjugate. There were two opposites, his will and the resisfunctional degree or magnitude, and then, provision made, tant Matter of the earth. And between these he could estab-let the devil supervene, let every man look after his own amuse-lish the very expression of his will, the incarnation of his power, ments and appetites, so long as he interfered with nobody.

a great and perfect machine, a system, an activity of pure or-So Gerald set himself to work, to put the great industry in der, pure mechanical repetition, repetition ad infinitum, hence order. In his travels, and in his accompanying readings, he eternal and infinite. He found his eternal and his infinite in had come to the conclusion that the essential secret of life was the pure machine-principle of perfect co-ordination into one harmony. He did not define to himself at all clearly what pure, complex, infinitely repeated motion, like the spinning harmony was. The word pleased him, he felt he had come to of a wheel; but a productive spinning, as the revolving of the his own conclusions. And he proceeded to put his philosophy universe may be called a productive spinning, a productive into practice by forcing order into the established world, trans-repetition through eternity, to infinity. And this is the lating the mystic word harmony into the practical word Godmotion, this productive repetition ad infinitum. And organisation.

Gerald was the God of the machine, Deus ex Machina. And Immediately he SAW the firm, he realised what he could the whole productive will of man was the Godhead.

do. He had a fight to fight with Matter, with the earth and He had his lifework now, to extend over the earth a great the coal it enclosed. This was the sole idea, to turn upon the and perfect system in which the will of man ran smooth and inanimate matter of the underground, and reduce it to his unthwarted, timeless, a Godhead in process. He had to begin will. And for this fight with matter, one must have perfect with the mines. The terms were given: first the resistant Mat-instruments in perfect organisation, a mechanism so subtle ter of the underground; then the instruments of its subjuga-and harmonious in its workings that it represents the single tion, instruments human and metallic; and finally his own mind of man, and by its relentless repetition of given move-pure will, his own mind. It would need a marvellous adjustment, will accomplish a purpose irresistibly, inhumanly. It ment of myriad instruments, human, animal, metallic, kinetic, Contents



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dynamic, a marvellous casting of myriad tiny wholes into one turn it over. The old grey managers, the old grey clerks, the great perfect entirety. And then, in this case there was perfec-doddering old pensioners, he looked at them, and removed tion attained, the will of the highest was perfectly fulfilled, them as so much lumber. The whole concern seemed like a the will of mankind was perfectly enacted; for was not man-hospital of invalid employees. He had no emotional qualms.

kind mystically contra-distinguished against inanimate MatHe arranged what pensions were necessary, he looked for effi-ter, was not the history of mankind just the history of the cient substitutes, and when these were found, he substituted conquest of the one by the other?

them for the old hands.

The miners were overreached. While they were still in the

'I've a pitiful letter here from Letherington,' his father toils of divine equality of man, Gerald had passed on, granted would say, in a tone of deprecation and appeal. 'Don't you essentially their case, and proceeded in his quality of human think the poor fellow might keep on a little longer. I always being to fulfil the will of mankind as a whole. He merely fancied he did very well.'

represented the miners in a higher sense when he perceived

'I've got a man in his place now, father. He'll be happier that the only way to fulfil perfectly the will of man was to out of it, believe me. You think his allowance is plenty, don't establish the perfect, inhuman machine. But he represented you?'

them very essentially, they were far behind, out of date, squab-

'It is not the allowance that he wants, poor man. He feels bling for their material equality. The desire had already transit very much, that he is superannuated. Says he thought he muted into this new and greater desire, for a perfect interven-had twenty more years of work in him yet.'

ing mechanism between man and Matter, the desire to trans-

'Not of this kind of work I want. He doesn't understand.'

late the Godhead into pure mechanism.

The father sighed. He wanted not to know any more. He As soon as Gerald entered the firm, the convulsion of death believed the pits would have to be overhauled if they were to ran through the old system. He had all his life been tortured go on working. And after all, it would be worst in the long by a

furious and destructive demon, which possessed him run for everybody, if they must close down. So he could make sometimes like an insanity. This temper now entered like a no answer to the appeals of his old and trusty servants, he virus into the firm, and there were cruel eruptions. Terrible could only repeat 'Gerald says.'

and inhuman were his examinations into every detail; there So the father drew more and more out of the light. The was no privacy he would spare, no old sentiment but he would whole frame of the real life was broken for him. He had been **Contents**



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right according to his lights. And his lights had been those of against every man mount up to a shilling or so in the week. It the great religion. Yet they seemed to have become obsolete, was not grasped very definitely by the miners, though they to be superseded in the world. He could not understand. He were sore enough. But it saved hundreds of pounds every week only withdrew with his lights into an inner room, into the for the firm.

silence. The beautiful candles of belief, that would not do to Gradually Gerald got hold of everything. And then began light the world any more, they would still burn sweetly and the great reform. Expert engineers were introduced in every sufficiently in the inner room of his soul, and in the silence of department. An enormous electric plant was installed, both his retirement.

for lighting and for haulage underground, and for power. The Gerald rushed

into the reform of the firm, beginning with electricity was carried into every mine. New machinery was the office. It was needful to economise severely, to make pos-brought from America, such as the miners had never seen sible the great alterations he must introduce.

before, great iron men, as the cutting machines were called,

'What are these widows' coals?' he asked.

and unusual appliances. The working of the pits was thor-

'We have always allowed all widows of men who worked oughly changed, all the control was taken out of the hands of for the firm a load of coals every three months.'

the miners, the butty system was abolished. Everything was

'They must pay cost price henceforward. The firm is not run on the most accurate and delicate scientific method, edu-a charity institution, as everybody seems to think.'

cated and expert men were in control everywhere, the miners Widows, these stock figures of sentimental humanitarian-were reduced to mere mechanical instruments. They had to ism, he felt a dislike at the thought of them. They were al-work hard, much harder than before, the work was terrible most repulsive. Why were they not immolated on the pyre of and heart-breaking in its mechanicalness.

the husband, like the sati in India? At any rate, let them pay But they submitted to it all. The joy went out of their the cost of their coals.

lives, the hope seemed to perish as they became more and In a thousand ways he cut down the expenditure, in ways more mechanised. And yet they accepted the new conditions.

so fine as to be hardly noticeable to the men. The miners They even got a further satisfaction out of them. At first they must pay for the cartage of their coals, heavy cartage too; they hated Gerald Crich, they swore to do

something to him, to must pay for their tools, for the sharpening, for the care of murder him. But as time went on, they accepted everything lamps, for the many trifling things that made the bill of charges with some fatal satisfaction. Gerald was their high priest, he **Contents**



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represented the religion they really felt. His father was for-they passed in a grey-black stream of unemotional acceptance.

gotten already. There was a new world, a new order, strict, They were not important to him, save as instruments, nor he terrible, inhuman, but satisfying in its very destructiveness.

to them, save as a supreme instrument of control. As miners The men were satisfied to belong to the great and wonderful they had their being, he had his being as director. He ad-machine, even whilst it destroyed them. It was what they mired their qualities. But as men, personalities, they were just wanted. It was the highest that man had produced, the most accidents, sporadic little unimportant phenomena. And tac-wonderful and superhuman. They were exalted by belonging itly, the men agreed to this. For Gerald agreed to it in him-to this great and superhuman system which was beyond feel-self.

ing or reason, something really godlike. Their hearts died within He had succeeded. He had converted the industry into a them, but their souls were satisfied. It was what they wanted.

new and terrible purity. There was a greater output of coal Otherwise Gerald

could never have done what he did. He than ever, the wonderful and delicate system ran almost per-was just ahead of them in giving them what they wanted, this fectly. He had a set of really clever engineers, both mining participation in a great and perfect system that subjected life and electrical, and they did not cost much. A highly educated to pure mathematical principles. This was a sort of freedom, man cost very little more than a workman. His managers, who the sort they really wanted. It was the first great step in un-were all rare men, were no more expensive than the old bundoing, the first great phase of chaos, the substitution of the gling fools of his father's days, who were merely colliers pro-mechanical principle for the organic, the destruction of the moted. His chief manager, who had twelve hundred a year, organic purpose, the organic unity, and the subordination of saved the firm at least five thousand. The whole system was every organic unit to the great mechanical purpose. It was now so perfect that Gerald was hardly necessary any more.

pure organic disintegration and pure mechanical organisation.

It was so perfect that sometimes a strange fear came over This is the first and finest state of chaos.

him, and he did not know what to do. He went on for some Gerald was satisfied. He knew the colliers said they hated years in a sort of trance of activity. What he was doing seemed him. But he had long ceased to hate them. When they supreme, he was almost like a divinity. He was a pure and streamed past him at evening, their heavy boots slurring on exalted activity.

the pavement wearily, their shoulders slightly distorted, they But now he had succeeded—he had finally succeeded. And took no notice of him, they gave him no greeting whatever, once or twice lately, when he was alone in the evening and **Contents**



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had nothing to do, he had suddenly stood up in terror, not faint, small but final sterile horror, that his mystic reason was knowing what he was. And he went to the mirror and looked breaking, giving way now, at this crisis.

long and closely at his own face, at his own eyes, seeking for And it was a strain. He knew there was no equilibrium.

something. He was afraid, in mortal dry fear, but he knew not He would have to go in some direction, shortly, to find relief.

what of. He looked at his own face. There it was, shapely and Only Birkin kept the fear definitely off him, saved him his healthy and the same as ever, yet somehow, it was not real, it quick sufficiency in life, by the odd mobility and change-was a mask. He dared not touch it, for fear it should prove to ableness which seemed to contain the quintessence of faith.

be only a composition mask. His eyes were blue and keen as But then Gerald must always come away from Birkin, as from ever, and as firm in their sockets. Yet he was not sure that they a Church service, back to the outside real world of work and were not blue false bubbles that would burst in a moment life. There it was, it did not alter, and words were futilities.

and leave clear annihilation. He could see the darkness in them, He had to keep himself in reckoning with the world of work as if they were only bubbles of darkness. He was afraid that and material life. And it became more and more difficult, one day he would break down and be a purely meaningless such a strange pressure was upon him, as if the very middle of babble lapping round a darkness.

him were a vacuum, and outside were an awful tension.

But his will yet held good, he was able to go away and He had found his most

satisfactory relief in women. After read, and think about things. He liked to read books about a debauch with some desperate woman, he went on quite easy the primitive man, books of anthropology, and also works of and forgetful. The devil of it was, it was so hard to keep up his speculative philosophy. His mind was very active. But it was interest in women nowadays. He didn't care about them any like a bubble floating in the darkness. At any moment it might more. A Pussum was all right in her way, but she was an burst and leave him in chaos. He would not die. He knew exceptional case, and even she mattered extremely little. No, that. He would go on living, but the meaning would have women, in that sense, were useless to him any more. He felt collapsed out of him, his divine reason would be gone. In a that his MIND needed acute stimulation, before he could be strangely indifferent, sterile way, he was frightened. But he physically roused.

could not react even to the fear. It was as if his centres of feeling were drying up. He remained calm, calculative and healthy, and quite freely deliberate, even whilst he felt, with

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sent for his daughter. She came accompanied by Mademoiselle.

'Winnie, this is Miss Brangwen, who will be so kind as to help you with your drawing and making models of your animals,' said the father.

The child looked at Gudrun for a moment with interest, before she came forward and with face averted offered her hand. There was a complete SANG FROID and indifference under Winifred's childish reserve, a certain irresponsible cal-Chapter 18.

lousness.

'How do you do?' said the child, not lifting her face.

Rabbit.

'How do you do?' said Gudrun.

Then Winifred stood aside, and Gudrun was introduced Gudrun knew that it was a critical thing for her to go to Mademoiselle.

Shortlands. She knew it was equivalent to accepting Gerald

'You have a fine day for your walk,' said Mademoiselle, in Crich as a lover. And though she hung back, disliking the a bright manner.

condition, yet she knew she would go on. She equivocated.

'QUITE fine,' said Gudrun.

She said to herself, in torment recalling the blow and the kiss, Winifred was watching from her distance. She was as if

'after all, what is it? What is a kiss? What even is a blow? It is amused, but rather unsure as yet what this new person was an instant, vanished at once. I can go to Shortlands just for a like. She saw so many new persons, and so few who became time, before I go away, if only to see what it is like.' For she real to her. Mademoiselle was of no count whatever, the child had an insatiable curiosity to see and to know everything.

merely put up with her, calmly and easily, accepting her little She also wanted to know what Winifred was really like.

authority with faint scorn, compliant out of childish arro-Having heard the

child calling from the steamer in the night, gance of indifference.

she felt some mysterious connection with her.

'Well, Winifred,' said the father, 'aren't you glad Miss Gudrun talked with the father in the library. Then he Brangwen has come? She makes animals and birds in wood

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and in clay, that the people in London write about in the the rest of the human scheme she submitted with a faint bored papers, praising them to the skies.'

indifference.

Winifred smiled slightly.

She had a pekinese dog called Looloo, which she loved.

'Who told you, Daddie?' she asked.

'Let us draw Looloo,' said Gudrun, 'and see if we can get

'Who told me? Hermione told me, and Rupert Birkin.'

his Looliness, shall we?'

'Do you know them?' Winifred asked of Gudrun, turning

'Darling!' cried Winifred, rushing to the dog, that sat with to her with faint challenge.

contemplative sadness on the hearth, and kissing its bulging

'Yes,' said Gudrun.

brow. 'Darling one, will you be drawn? Shall its mummy draw Winifred readjusted herself a little. She had been ready to its portrait?' Then she chuckled gleefully, and turning to accept Gudrun as a sort of servant. Now she saw it was on Gudrun, said: 'Oh let's!'

terms of friendship they were intended to meet. She was rather They proceeded to get pencils and paper, and were ready.

glad. She had so many half inferiors, whom she tolerated with

'Beautifullest,' cried Winifred, hugging the dog, 'sit still perfect goodhumour.

while its mummy draws its beautiful portrait.' The dog looked Gudrun was very calm. She also did not take these things up at her with grievous resignation in its large, prominent very seriously. A new occasion was mostly spectacular to her.

eyes. She kissed it fervently, and said: 'I wonder what mine However, Winifred was a detached, ironic child, she would will be like. It's sure to be awful.'

never attach herself. Gudrun liked her and was intrigued by As she sketched she chuckled to herself, and cried out at her. The first meetings went off with a certain humiliating times:

clumsiness. Neither Winifred nor her instructress had any

'Oh darling, you're so beautiful!'

social grace.

And again chuckling, she rushed to embrace the dog, in Soon, however, they met in a kind of make-belief world.

penitence, as if she were doing him some subtle injury. He sat Winifred did not notice human beings unless they were like all the time with the resignation and fretfulness of ages on his herself, playful and slightly mocking. She would accept nothing dark velvety face. She drew slowly, with a wicked concentra-but the world of amusement, and the serious people of her tion in her eyes, her head on one side, an intense stillness over life were the animals she had for pets. On those she lavished, her. She was as if working the spell of some enchantment.

almost ironically, her affection and her companionship. To Suddenly she had finished. She looked at the dog, and then

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at her drawing, and then cried, with real grief for the dog, and

'Why that's Looloo!' he exclaimed. And he looked down at the same time with a wicked exultation:

in surprise, hearing the almost inhuman chuckle of the child

'My beautiful, why did they?'

at his side.

She took her paper to the dog, and held it under his nose.

Gerald was away from home when Gudrun first came to He turned his head aside as in chagrin and mortification, and Shortlands. But the first morning he came back he watched she impulsively kissed his velvety bulging forehead.

for her. It was a sunny, soft morning, and he lingered in the

''s a Loolie, 's a little Loozie! Look at his portrait, darling, garden paths, looking at the flowers that had come out dur-look at his portrait, that his mother has done of him.' She ing his absence. He was clean and fit as ever, shaven, his fair looked at her paper and chuckled. Then, kissing the dog once hair scrupulously parted at the side, bright in the sunshine, more, she rose and came gravely to Gudrun, offering her the his short, fair moustache closely clipped, his eyes with their paper.

humorous kind twinkle, which was so deceptive. He was dressed It was a grotesque little diagram of a grotesque little ani-in black, his clothes sat well on his well-nourished body. Yet mal, so wicked and so comical, a slow smile came over Gudrun's as he lingered before the flower-beds in the morning sun-face, unconsciously. And at her side Winifred chuckled with shine, there was a certain isolation, a fear about him, as of glee, and said: something wanting.

'It isn't like him, is it? He's much lovelier than that. He's Gudrun came up quickly, unseen. She was dressed in blue, SO beautiful-mmm, Looloo, my sweet darling.' And she flew with woollen yellow stockings, like the Bluecoat boys. He off to embrace the chagrined little dog. He looked up at her glanced up in surprise. Her stockings always disconcerted him, with reproachful, saturnine eyes, vanquished in his extreme the pale-yellow stockings and the heavy heavy black shoes.

agedness of being. Then she flew back to her drawing, and Winifred, who had been playing about the garden with Ma-chuckled with satisfaction.

demoiselle and the dogs, came flitting towards Gudrun. The

'It isn't like him, is it?' she said to Gudrun.

child wore a dress of black-and-white stripes. Her hair was

'Yes, it's very like him,' Gudrun replied.

rather short, cut round and hanging level in her neck.

The child treasured her drawing, carried it about with her,

'We're going to do Bismarck, aren't we?' she said, linking and showed it, with a silent embarrassment, to everybody.

her hand through Gudrun's arm.

'Look,' she said, thrusting the paper into her father's hand.

'Yes, we're going to do Bismarck. Do you want to?'

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'Oh yes-oh I do! I want most awfully to do Bismarck. He

'Doch!' said Winifred briefly, indifferent.

looks SO splendid this morning, so FIERCE. He's almost as

'Doch ist er nicht ein Konig. Beesmarck, he was not a king, big as a lion.' And the child chuckled sardonically at her own Winifred, as you have said. He was only-il n'etait que hyperbole. 'He's a real king, he really is.'

chancelier.'

'Bon jour, Mademoiselle,' said the little French governess,

'Qu'est ce qu'un chancelier?' said Winifred, with slightly wavering up with a slight bow, a bow of the sort that Gudrun contemptuous indifference.

loathed, insolent.

'A chancelier is a chancellor, and a chancellor is, I believe, a

'Winifred veut tant faire le portrait de Bismarck-! Oh, sort of judge,' said Gerald coming up and shaking hands with mais toute la matinee-"We will do Bismarck this morning!"-

Gudrun. 'You'll have made a song of Bismarck soon,' said he.

Bismarck, Bismarck, toujours Bismarck! C'est un lapin, n'est-Mademoiselle waited, and discreetly made her inclination, ce pas, mademoiselle?'

and her greeting.

'Oui, c'est un grand lapin blanc et noir. Vous ne l'avez pas

'So they wouldn't let you see Bismarck, Mademoiselle?' he vu?' said Gudrun in her good, but rather heavy French.

said.

'Non, mademoiselle, Winifred n'a jamais voulu me le faire

'Non, Monsieur.'

voir. Tant de fois je le lui ai demande, "Qu'est ce donc que ce

'Ay, very mean of them. What are you going to do to him, Bismarck, Winifred?" Mais elle n'a pas voulu me le dire. Son Miss Brangwen? I want him sent to the kitchen and cooked.'

Bismarck, c'etait un mystere.'

'Oh no,' cried Winifred.

'Oui, c'est un mystere, vraiment un mystere! Miss

'We're going to draw him,' said Gudrun.

Brangwen, say that Bismarck is a mystery,' cried Winifred.

'Draw him and quarter him and dish him up,' he said,

'Bismarck, is a mystery, Bismarck, c'est un mystere, der being purposely fatuous.

Bismarck, er ist ein Wunder,' said Gudrun, in mocking in-

'Oh no,' cried Winifred with emphasis, chuckling.

cantation.

Gudrun detected the tang of mockery in him, and she

'Ja, er ist ein Wunder,' repeated Winifred, with odd seri-looked up and smiled into his face. He felt his nerves ca-ousness, under which lay a wicked chuckle.

ressed. Their eyes met in knowledge.

'Ist er auch ein Wunder?' came the slightly insolent sneer-

'How do you like Shortlands?' he asked.

ing of Mademoiselle.

'Oh, very much,' she said, with nonchalance.

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'Glad you do. Have you noticed these flowers?'

her.

He led her along the path. She followed intently. Winifred At the same time he was finely and acutely aware of came, and the governess lingered in the rear. They stopped Mademoiselle's neat, brittle finality of form. She was like some before some veined salpiglossis flowers.

elegant beetle with thin ankles, perched on her high heels, her

'Aren't they wonderful?' she cried, looking at them glossy black dress perfectly correct, her dark hair done high absorbedly. Strange how her reverential, almost ecstatic ad-and admirably. How repulsive her completeness and her fi-miration of the flowers caressed his nerves. She stooped down, nality was! He loathed her.

and touched the trumpets, with infinitely fine and delicate-Yet he did admire her. She was perfectly correct. And it touching fingertips. It filled him with ease to see her. When did rather annoy him, that Gudrun came dressed in startling she rose, her eyes, hot with the beauty of the flowers, looked colours, like a macaw, when the family was in mourning. Like into his.

a macaw she was! He watched the lingering way she took her

'What are they?' she asked.

feet from the ground. And her ankles were pale yellow, and

'Sort of petunia, I suppose,' he answered. 'I don't really her dress a deep blue. Yet it pleased him. It pleased him very know them.'

much. He felt the challenge in her very attire-she challenged

'They are quite strangers to me,' she said.

the whole world. And he smiled as to the note of a trumpet.

They stood together in a false intimacy, a nervous contact.

Gudrun and Winifred went through the house to the back, And he was in love with her.

where were the stables and the out-buildings. Everywhere She was aware of Mademoiselle standing near, like a little was still and deserted. Mr Crich had gone out for a short French beetle, observant and calculating. She moved away with drive, the stableman had just led round Gerald's horse. The Winifred, saying they would go to find Bismarck.

two girls went to the hutch that stood in a corner, and looked Gerald watched them go, looking all the while at the soft, at the great black-and-white rabbit.

full, still body of Gudrun, in its silky cashmere. How silky

'Isn't he beautiful! Oh, do look at him listening! Doesn't and rich and soft her body must be. An excess of appreciation he look silly!' she laughed quickly, then added 'Oh, do let's do came over his mind, she was the all-desirable, the all-beauti-him listening, do let us, he listens with so much of himself;-

ful. He wanted only to come to her, nothing more. He was don't you darling Bismarck?'

only this, this being that should come to her, and be given to

'Can we take him out?' said Gudrun.

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'He's very strong. He really is extremely strong.' She looked bit was magically strong, it was all she could do to keep her at Gudrun, her head on one side, in odd calculating mistrust.

grasp. She almost lost her presence of mind.

'But we'll try, shall we?'

'Bismarck, Bismarck, you are behaving terribly,' said

'Yes, if you like. But he's a fearful kicker!'

Winifred in a rather frightened voice, 'Oh, do put him down, They took the key to unlock the door. The rabbit exploded he's beastly.'

in a wild rush round the hutch.

Gudrun stood for a moment astounded by the thunder-

'He scratches most awfully sometimes,' cried Winifred in storm that had sprung into being in her grip. Then her colour excitement. 'Oh do look at him, isn't he wonderful!' The rab-came up, a heavy rage came over her like a cloud. She stood bit tore round the hutch in a hurry. 'Bismarck!' cried the child, shaken as a house in a storm, and utterly overcome. Her heart in rousing excitement. 'How DREADFUL you are! You are was arrested with fury at the mindlessness and the bestial beastly.' Winifred looked up at Gudrun with some misgiving stupidity of this struggle, her wrists were badly scored by the in her wild excitement. Gudrun smiled sardonically with her claws of the beast, a heavy cruelty welled up in her.

mouth. Winifred made a strange crooning noise of unaccount-Gerald came round as she was trying to capture the flying able excitement. 'Now he's still!' she cried, seeing the rabbit rabbit under her arm. He saw, with subtle recognition, her settled down in a far corner of the hutch. 'Shall we take him sullen passion of cruelty.

now?' she whispered excitedly, mysteriously, looking up at

'You should let one of the men do that for you,' he said Gudrun and edging very close. 'Shall we get him now?-' she hurrying up.

chuckled wickedly to herself.

'Oh, he's SO horrid!' cried Winifred, almost frantic.

They unlocked the door of the hutch. Gudrun thrust in He held out his nervous, sinewy hand and took the rabbit her arm and seized the great, lusty rabbit as it crouched still, by the ears, from Gudrun.

she grasped its long ears. It set its four feet flat, and thrust

'It's most FEARFULLY strong,' she cried, in a high voice, back. There was a long scraping sound as it was hauled for-like the crying a seagull, strange and vindictive.

ward, and in another instant it was in mid-air, lunging wildly, The rabbit made itself into a ball in the air, and lashed its body flying like a spring coiled

and released, as it lashed out, flinging itself into a bow. It really seemed demoniacal.

out, suspended from the ears. Gudrun held the black-and-Gudrun saw Gerald's body tighten, saw a sharp blindness come white tempest at arms' length, averting her face. But the rab-into his eyes.

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'I know these beggars of old,' he said.

'Abominable,' he said.

The long, demon-like beast lashed out again, spread on

'He shouldn't be so silly when he has to be taken out,'

the air as if it were flying, looking something like a dragon, Winifred was saying, putting out her hand and touching the then closing up again, inconceivably powerful and explosive.

rabbit tentatively, as it skulked under his arm, motionless as if The man's body, strung to its efforts, vibrated strongly. Then it were dead.

a sudden sharp, white-edged wrath came up in him. Swift as

'He's not dead, is he Gerald?' she asked.

lightning he drew back and brought his free hand down like

'No, he ought to be,' he said.

a hawk on the neck of the rabbit. Simultaneously, there came

'Yes, he ought!' cried the child, with a sudden flush of the unearthly abhorrent scream of a rabbit in the fear of death.

amusement. And she touched the rabbit with more confi-It made one immense writhe, tore his wrists and his sleeves in dence. 'His heart is beating SO fast. Isn't he funny? He really a final convulsion, all its belly flashed white in a whirlwind of is.'

paws, and then he had slung it round and had it under his

'Where do you want him?' asked Gerald.

arm, fast. It cowered and skulked. His face was gleaming with

'In the little green court,' she said.

a smile.

Gudrun looked at Gerald with strange, darkened eyes,

'You wouldn't think there was all that force in a rabbit,' he strained with underworld knowledge, almost supplicating, like said, looking at Gudrun. And he saw her eyes black as night those of a creature which is at his mercy, yet which is his in her pallid face, she looked almost unearthly. The scream of ultimate victor. He did not know what to say to her. He felt the rabbit, after the violent tussle, seemed to have torn the the mutual hellish recognition. And he felt he ought to say veil of her consciousness. He looked at her, and the whitish, something, to cover it. He had the power of lightning in his electric gleam in his face intensified.

nerves, she seemed like a soft recipient of his magical, hideous

'I don't really like him,' Winifred was crooning. 'I don't white fire. He was unconfident, he had qualms of fear.

care for him as I do for Loozie. He's hateful really.'

'Did he hurt you?' he asked.

A smile twisted Gudrun's face, as she recovered. She knew

'No,' she said.

she was revealed. 'Don't they make the most fearful noise when

'He's an insensible beast,' he said, turning his face away.

they scream?' she cried, the high note in her voice, like a sea-They came to the little court, which was shut in by old gull's cry.

red walls in whose crevices wall-flowers were growing. The

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grass was soft and fine and old, a level floor carpeting the conscious, unthinkable red ether of the beyond, the obscene court, the sky was blue overhead. Gerald tossed the rabbit beyond.

down. It crouched still and would not move. Gudrun watched

'It doesn't hurt you very much, does it?' he asked, solici-it with faint horror.

tous.

'Why doesn't it move?' she cried.

'Not at all,' she cried.

'It's skulking,' he said.

And suddenly the rabbit, which had been crouching as if She looked up at him, and a slight sinister smile contracted it were a flower, so still and soft, suddenly burst into life.

her white face.

Round and round the court it went, as if shot from a gun,

'Isn't it a FOOL!' she cried. 'Isn't it a sickening FOOL?'

round and round like a furry meteorite, in a tense hard circle The vindictive mockery in her voice made his brain quiver.

that seemed to bind their brains. They all stood in amaze-Glancing up at him, into his eyes, she revealed again the mock-ment, smiling uncannily, as if the rabbit were obeying some ing, white-cruel recognition. There was a league between them, unknown incantation. Round and round it flew, on the grass abhorrent to them both. They were implicated with each other under the old red walls like a storm.

in abhorrent mysteries.

And then quite suddenly it settled down, hobbled among

'How many scratches have you?' he asked, showing his hard the grass, and sat considering, its nose twitching like a bit of forearm, white and hard and torn in red gashes.

fluff in the wind. After having considered for a few minutes,

'How really vile!' she cried, flushing with a sinister vision.

a soft bunch with a black, open eye, which perhaps was look-

'Mine is nothing.'

ing at them, perhaps was not, it hobbled calmly forward and She lifted her arm and showed a deep red score down the began to nibble the grass with that mean motion of a rabbit's silken white flesh.

quick eating.

'What a devil!' he exclaimed. But it was as if he had had

'It's mad,' said Gudrun. 'It is most decidedly mad.'

knowledge of her in the long red rent of her forearm, so silken He laughed.

and soft. He did not want to touch her. He would have to

'The question is,' he said, 'what is madness? I don't sup-make himself touch her, deliberately. The long, shallow red pose it is rabbit-mad.'

rip seemed torn across his own brain, tearing the surface of

'Don't you think it is?' she asked.

his ultimate consciousness, letting through the forever un-

'No. That's what it is to be a rabbit.'

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There was a queer, faint, obscene smile over his face. She looked at him and saw him, and knew that he was initiate as she was initiate. This thwarted her, and contravened her, for the moment.

'God be praised we aren't rabbits,' she said, in a high, shrill voice.

The smile intensified a little, on his face.

'Not rabbits?' he said, looking at her fixedly.

Slowly her face relaxed into a smile of obscene recognition.

'Ah Gerald,' she said, in a strong, slow, almost man-like Chapter 19.

way. '-All that, and more.' Her eyes looked up at him with *Moony*.

shocking nonchalance.

He felt again as if she had torn him across the breast, dully, After his illness Birkin went to the south of France for a finally. He turned aside.

time. He did not write, nobody heard anything of him. Ursula,

'Eat, eat my darling!' Winifred was softly conjuring the left alone, felt as if everything were lapsing out. There seemed rabbit, and creeping forward to touch it. It hobbled away to be no hope in the world. One was a tiny little rock with the from her. 'Let its mother stroke its fur then, darling, because tide of nothingness rising higher and higher She herself was it is so mysterious-'

real, and only herself—just like a rock in a wash of flood-water. The rest was all nothingness. She was hard and indifferent, isolated in herself.

There was nothing for it now, but contemptuous, resistant indifference. All the world was lapsing into a grey wish-wash of nothingness, she had no contact and no connection anywhere. She despised and detested the whole show. From the bottom of her heart, from the bottom of her soul, she **Contents**



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despised and detested people, adult people. She loved only She went out one evening, numbed by this constant es-children and animals: children she loved passionately, but sential suffering. Those who are timed for destruction must coldly. They made her want to hug them, to protect them, to die now. The knowledge of this reached a finality, a finishing give them life. But this very love, based on pity and despair, in her. And the finality released her. If fate would carry off in was only a bondage and a pain to her. She loved best of all the death or downfall all those who were timed to go, why need animals, that were single and unsocial as she herself was. She she trouble, why repudiate any further. She was free of it all, loved the horses and cows in the field. Each was single and to she could seek a new union elsewhere.

itself, magical. It was not referred away to some detestable Ursula set off to Willey Green, towards the mill. She came social principle. It was incapable of soulfulness and tragedy, to Willey Water. It was almost full again, after its period of which she detested so profoundly.

emptiness. Then she turned off through the woods. The night She could be very pleasant and flattering, almost subser-had fallen, it was dark. But she forgot to be afraid, she who vient, to people she met. But no one was taken

in. Instinc-had such great sources of fear. Among the trees, far from any tively each felt her contemptuous mockery of the human be-human beings, there was a sort of magic peace. The more one ing in himself, or herself. She had a profound grudge against could find a pure loneliness, with no taint of people, the bet-the human being. That which the word 'human' stood for was ter one felt. She was in reality terrified, horrified in her ap-despicable and repugnant to her.

prehension of people.

Mostly her heart was closed in this hidden, unconscious She started, noticing something on her right hand, be-strain of contemptuous ridicule. She thought she loved, she tween the tree trunks. It was like a great presence, watching thought she was full of love. This was her idea of herself. But her, dodging her. She started violently. It was only the moon, the strange brightness of her presence, a marvellous radiance risen through the thin trees. But it seemed so mysterious, of intrinsic vitality, was a luminousness of supreme repudia-with its white and deathly smile. And there was no avoiding tion, nothing but repudiation.

it. Night or day, one could not escape the sinister face, trium-Yet, at moments, she yielded and softened, she wanted phant and radiant like this moon, with a high smile. She hur-pure love, only pure love. This other, this state of constant ried on, cowering from the white planet. She would just see unfailing repudiation, was a strain, a suffering also. A terrible the pond at the mill before she went home.

desire for pure love overcame her again.

Not wanting to go through the yard, because of the dogs,

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she turned off along the hillside to descend on the pond repelled her. She wished it were perfectly dark, perfectly, and from above. The moon was transcendent over the bare, open noiseless and without motion. Birkin, small and dark also, his space, she suffered from being exposed to it. There was a glim-hair tinged with moonlight, wandered nearer. He was quite mer of nightly rabbits across the ground. The night was as near, and yet he did not exist in her. He did not know she was clear as crystal, and very still. She could hear a distant cough-there. Supposing he did something he would not wish to be ing of a sheep.

seen doing, thinking he was quite private? But there, what So she swerved down to the steep, tree-hidden bank above did it matter? What did the small priyacies matter? How the pond, where the alders twisted their roots. She was glad to could it matter, what he did? How can there be any secrets, pass into the shade out of the moon. There she stood, at the we are all the same organisms? How can there be any secrecy, top of the fallen-away bank, her hand on the rough trunk of when everything is known to all of us?

a tree, looking at the water, that was perfect in its stillness, He was touching unconsciously the dead husks of flowers floating the moon upon it. But for some reason she disliked as he passed by, and talking disconnectedly to himself.

it. It did not give her anything. She listened for the hoarse

'You can't go away,' he was saying. 'There IS no away. You rustle of the sluice. And she wished for something else out of only withdraw upon yourself.'

the night, she wanted another night, not this moon-brilliant He threw a dead flower-husk on to the water.

hardness. She could feel her soul crying out in her, lamenting

'An antiphony—they lie, and you sing back to them. There desolately.

wouldn't have to be any truth, if there weren't any lies. Then She saw a shadow moving by the water. It would be Birkin.

one needn't assert anything—'

He had come back then, unawares. She accepted it without He stood still, looking at the water, and throwing upon it remark, nothing mattered to her. She sat down among the the husks of the flowers.

roots of the alder tree, dim and veiled, hearing the sound of

'Cybele—curse her! The accursed Syria Dea! Does one the sluice like dew distilling audibly into the night. The is-begrudge it her? What else is there —?'

lands were dark and half revealed, the reeds were dark also, Ursula wanted to laugh loudly and hysterically, hearing only some of them had a little frail fire of reflection. A fish his isolated voice speaking out. It was so ridiculous.

leaped secretly, revealing the light in the pond. This fire of He stood staring at the water. Then he stooped and picked the chill night breaking constantly on to the pure darkness, up a stone, which he threw sharply at the pond. Ursula was **Contents**



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aware of the bright moon leaping and swaying, all distorted, explosion over her face, dazzling her; and then, almost imme-in her eyes. It seemed to shoot out arms of fire like a cuttle-diately, came the second shot. The moon leapt up white and fish, like a luminous polyp, palpitating strongly before her.

burst through the air. Darts of bright light shot asunder, dark-And his shadow on the border of the pond, was watching ness swept over the centre. There was no moon, only a battle-for a few moments, then he stooped and groped on the ground.

field of broken lights and shadows, running close together.

Then again there was a burst of sound, and a burst of bril-Shadows, dark and heavy, struck again and again across the liant light, the moon had exploded on the water, and was place where the heart of the moon had been, obliterating it flying asunder in flakes of white and dangerous fire. Rapidly, altogether. The white fragments pulsed up and down, and like white birds, the fires all broken rose across the pond, flee-could not find where to go, apart and brilliant on the water ing in clamorous confusion, battling with the flock of dark like the petals of a rose that a wind has blown far and wide.

waves that were forcing their way in. The furthest waves of Yet again, they were flickering their way to the centre, find-light, fleeing out, seemed to be clamouring against the shore ing the path blindly, enviously. And again, all was still, as for escape, the waves of darkness came in heavily, running Birkin and Ursula watched. The waters were loud on the shore.

under towards the centre. But at the centre, the heart of all, He saw the moon regathering itself insidiously, saw the heart was still a vivid, incandescent quivering of a white moon not of the rose intertwining vigorously and blindly, calling back quite destroyed, a white body of fire writhing and striving the scattered fragments, winning home the fragments, in a and not even now broken open, not yet violated. It seemed to pulse and in effort of return.

be drawing itself together with strange, violent pangs, in blind And he was

not satisfied. Like a madness, he must go on.

effort. It was getting stronger, it was re-asserting itself, the He got large stones, and threw them, one after the other, at inviolable moon. And the rays were hastening in in thin lines the white-burning centre of the moon, till there was nothing of light, to return to the strengthened moon, that shook upon but a rocking of hollow noise, and a pond surged up, no moon the water in triumphant reassumption.

any more, only a few broken flakes tangled and glittering Birkin stood and watched, motionless, till the pond was broadcast in the darkness, without aim or meaning, a dark-almost calm, the moon was almost serene. Then, satisfied of ened confusion, like a black and white kaleidoscope tossed at so much, he looked for more stones. She felt his invisible te-random. The hollow night was rocking and crashing with noise, nacity. And in a moment again, the broken lights scattered in and from the sluice came sharp, regular flashes of sound. Flakes **Contents**



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of light appeared here and there, glittering tormented among

'How long have you been there?'

the shadows, far off, in strange places; among the dripping

'All the time. You won't throw any more stones, will you?'

shadow of the willow on the island. Birkin stood and listened

'I wanted to see if I could make it be quite gone off the and was satisfied.

pond,' he said.

Ursula was dazed, her mind was all gone. She felt she had

'Yes, it was horrible, really. Why should you hate the moon?

fallen to the ground and was spilled out, like water on the It hasn't done you any harm, has it?'

earth. Motionless and spent she remained in the gloom.

'Was it hate?' he said.

Though even now she was aware, unseeing, that in the dark-And they were silent for a few minutes.

ness was a little tumult of ebbing flakes of light, a cluster

'When did you come back?' she said.

dancing secretly in a round, twining and coming steadily to-

'Today.'

gether. They were gathering a heart again, they were coming

'Why did you never write?'

once more into being. Gradually the fragments caught to-

'I could find nothing to say.'

gether re-united, heaving, rocking, dancing, falling back as in

'Why was there nothing to say?'

panic, but working their way home again persistently, making

'I don't know. Why are there no daffodils now?'

semblance of fleeing away when they had advanced, but al-

'No.'

ways flickering nearer, a little closer to the mark, the cluster Again there was a space of silence. Ursula looked at the growing mysteriously larger and brighter, as gleam after gleam moon. It had gathered itself together, and was quivering fell in with the whole, until a ragged rose, a distorted, frayed slightly.

moon was shaking upon the waters again, re-asserted, renewed,

'Was it good for you, to be alone?' she asked.

trying to recover from its convulsion, to get over the disfig-

'Perhaps. Not that I know much. But I got over a good urement and the agitation, to be whole and composed, at deal. Did you do anything important?'

peace.

'No. I looked at England, and thought I'd done with it.'

Birkin lingered vaguely by the water. Ursula was afraid

'Why England?' he asked in surprise.

that he would stone the moon again. She slipped from her

'I don't know, it came like that.'

seat and went down to him, saying:

'It isn't a question of nations,' he said. 'France is far worse.'

'You won't throw stones at it any more, will you?'

'Yes, I know. I felt I'd done with it all.'

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They went and sat down on the roots of the trees, in the own ends. You don't want to serve ME, and yet you want me shadow. And being silent, he remembered the beauty of her to serve you. It is so one-sided!'

eyes, which were sometimes filled with light, like spring, suf-It was a great effort to him to maintain this conversation, fused with wonderful promise. So he said to her, slowly, with and to press for the thing he wanted from her, the surrender difficulty: of her spirit.

'There is a golden light in you, which I wish you would

'It is different,' he said. 'The two kinds of service are so give me.' It was as if he had been thinking of this for some different. I serve you in another way—not through YOUR-time.

SELF—somewhere else. But I want us to be together with-She was startled, she seemed to leap clear of him. Yet also out bothering about ourselves—to be really together because she was pleased.

we ARE together, as if it were a phenomenon, not a not a

'What kind of a light,' she asked.

thing we have to maintain by our own effort.'

But he was shy, and did not say any more. So the moment

'No,' she said, pondering. 'You are just egocentric. You never passed for this time. And gradually a feeling of sorrow came have any enthusiasm, you never come out with any spark to-over her.

wards me. You want yourself, really, and your own affairs.

'My life is unfulfilled,' she said.

And you want me just to be there, to serve you.'

'Yes,' he answered briefly, not wanting to hear this.

But this only made him shut off from her.

'And I feel as if nobody could ever really love me,' she said.

'Ah well,' he said, 'words make no matter, any way. The But he did not answer.

thing IS between us, or it isn't.'

'You think, don't you,' she said slowly, 'that I only want

'You don't even love me,' she cried.

physical things? It isn't true. I want you to serve my spirit.'

'I do,' he said angrily. 'But I want—' His mind saw again

'I know you do. I know you don't want physical things by the lovely golden light of spring transfused through her eyes, themselves. But, I want you to give me—to give your spirit to as through some wonderful window. And he wanted her to me—that golden light which is you—which you don't know—

be with him there, in this world of proud indifference. But give it me—'

what was the good of telling her he wanted this company in After a moment's silence she replied:

proud indifference. What was the good of talking, any way?

'But how can I, you don't love me! You only want your It must happen beyond the sound of words. It was merely

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ruinous to try to work her by conviction. This was a paradisal

'No,' he said, outspoken with anger. 'I want you to drop bird that could never be netted, it must fly by itself to the your assertive WILL, your frightened apprehensive self-in-heart.

sistence, that is what I want. I want you to trust yourself so

'I always think I am going to be loved—and then I am let implicitly, that you can let yourself go.'

down. You DON'T love me, you know. You don't want to

'Let myself go!' she reechoed in mockery. 'I can let my-serve me. You only want yourself.'

self go, easily enough. It is you who can't let yourself go, it is A shiver of rage went over his veins, at this repeated: 'You you who hang on to yourself as if it were your only treasure.

don't want to serve me.' All the paradisal disappeared from YOU—YOU are the Sunday school teacher—YOU—you him.

preacher.'

'No,' he said, irritated, 'I don't want to serve you, because The amount of truth that was in this made him stiff and there is nothing there to serve. What you want me to serve, is unheeding of her.

nothing, mere nothing. It isn't even you, it is your mere fe-

'I don't mean let yourself go in the Dionysic ecstatic way,'

male quality. And I wouldn't give a straw for your female he said. 'I know you can do that. But I hate ecstasy, Dionysic ego—it's a rag doll.'

or any other. It's like going round in a squirrel cage. I want

'Ha!' she laughed in mockery. 'That's all you think of me, you not to care about yourself, just to be there and not to care is it? And then you have the impudence to say you love me.'

about yourself, not to insist—be glad and sure and indiffer-She rose in anger, to go home.

ent.'

You want the paradisal unknowing,' she said, turning round

'Who insists?' she mocked. 'Who is it that keeps on in-on him as he still sat half-visible in the shadow. 'I know what sisting? It isn't ME!'

that means, thank you. You want me to be your thing, never There was a weary, mocking bitterness in her voice. He to criticise you or to have

anything to say for myself. You was silent for some time.

want me to be a mere THING for you! No thank you! IF

'I know,' he said. 'While ever either of us insists to the you want that, there are plenty of women who will give it to other, we are all wrong. But there we are, the accord doesn't you. There are plenty of women who will lie down for you to come.'

walk over them—GO to them then, if that's what you want—

They sat in stillness under the shadow of the trees by the go to them.'

bank. The night was white around them, they were in the

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darkness, barely conscious.

any desires or any will, just to be still with her, to be perfectly Gradually, the stillness and peace came over them. She still and together, in a peace that was not sleep, but content in put her hand tentatively on his. Their hands clasped softly bliss. To be content in bliss, without desire or insistence any-and silently, in peace.

where, this was heaven: to be together in happy stillness.

'Do you really love me?' she said.

For a long time she nestled to him, and he kissed her softly, He laughed.

her hair, her face, her ears, gently, softly, like dew falling. But

'I call that your war-cry,' he replied, amused.

this warm breath on her ears disturbed her again, kindled the

'Why!' she cried, amused and really wondering.

old destructive fires. She cleaved to him, and he could feel his

'Your insistence—Your war-cry—"A Brangwen, A blood changing like quicksilver.

Brangwen"—an old battle-cry. Yours is, "Do you love me?

'But we'll be still, shall we?' he said.

Yield knave, or die."

'Yes,' she said, as if submissively.

'No,' she said, pleading, 'not like that. Not like that. But I And she continued to nestle against him.

must know that you love me, mustn't I?'

But in a little while she drew away and looked at him.

'Well then, know it and have done with it.'

'I must be going home,' she said.

'But do you?'

'Must you—how sad,' he replied.

'Yes, I do. I love you, and I know it's final. It is final, so She leaned forward and put up her mouth to be kissed.

why say any more about it.'

'Are you really sad?' she murmured, smiling.

She was silent for some moments, in delight and doubt.

'Yes,' he said, 'I wish we could stay as we were, always.'

'Are you sure?' she said, nestling happily near to him.

'Always! Do you?' she murmured, as he kissed her. And

'Quite sure—so now have done—accept it and have done.'

then, out of a full throat, she crooned 'Kiss me! Kiss me!' And She was nestled quite close to him.

she cleaved close to him. He kissed her many times. But he

'Have done with what?' she murmured, happily.

too had his idea and his will. He wanted only gentle com-

'With bothering,' he said.

munion, no other, no passion now. So that soon she drew away, She clung nearer to him. He held her close, and kissed her put on her hat and went home.

softly, gently. It was such peace and heavenly freedom, just to The next day however, he felt wistful and yearning. He fold her and kiss her gently, and not to have any thoughts or thought he had been wrong, perhaps. Perhaps he had been **Contents**



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wrong to go to her with an idea of what he wanted. Was it was imminent in himself must have taken place in these Af-really only an idea, or was it the interpretation of a profound ricans: the goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and yearning? If the latter, how was it he was always talking about productive happiness must have lapsed, leaving the single sensual fulfilment? The two did not agree very well.

impulse for knowledge in one sort, mindless progressive knowl-Suddenly he found himself face to face with a situation.

edge through the senses, knowledge arrested and ending in It was as simple as this: fatally simple. On the one hand, he the senses, mystic knowledge in disintegration and dissolu-knew he did not want a further sensual experience —some-tion, knowledge such as the beetles have, which live purely thing deeper, darker, than ordinary life could give. He re-within the world of corruption and cold dissolution. This was membered the African fetishes he had seen at Halliday's so why her face looked like a beetle's: this was why the Egyp-often. There came back to him one, a statuette about two feet tians worshipped the ball-rolling scarab: because of the prin-high, a tall, slim, elegant figure from West Africa, in dark ciple of knowledge in dissolution and corruption.

wood, glossy and suave. It was a woman, with hair dressed There is a long way we can travel, after the death-break: high, like a melon-shaped dome. He remembered her vividly: after that point when the soul in intense suffering breaks, she was one of his soul's intimates. Her body was long and breaks away from its organic hold like a leaf that falls. We fall elegant, her face was crushed tiny like a beetle's, she had rows from the connection with life and

hope, we lapse from pure of round heavy collars, like a column of quoits, on her neck.

integral being, from creation and liberty, and we fall into the He remembered her: her astonishing cultured elegance, her long, long African process of purely sensual understanding, diminished, beetle face, the astounding long elegant body, on knowledge in the mystery of dissolution.

short, ugly legs, with such protuberant buttocks, so weighty He realised now that this is a long process—thousands of and unexpected below her slim long loins. She knew what he years it takes, after the death of the creative spirit. He realised himself did not know. She had thousands of years of purely that there were great mysteries to be unsealed, sensual, mind-sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge behind her. It must less, dreadful mysteries, far beyond the phallic cult. How far, have been thousands of years since her race had died, mysti-in their inverted culture, had these West Africans gone be-cally: that is, since the relation between the senses and the yond phallic knowledge? Very, very far. Birkin recalled again outspoken mind had broken, leaving the experience all in one the female figure: the elongated, long, long body, the curious sort, mystically sensual. Thousands of years ago, that which unexpected heavy buttocks, he long, imprisoned neck, the face **Contents**



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with tiny features like a beetle's. This was far beyond any teries any more. There was another way, the way of freedom.

phallic knowledge, sensual subtle realities far beyond the scope There was

the paradisal entry into pure, single being, the of phallic investigation.

individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union, There remained this way, this awful African process, to be stronger than any pangs of emotion, a lovely state of free proud fulfilled. It would be done differently by the white races. The singleness, which accepted the obligation of the permanent white races, having the arctic north behind them, the vast connection with others, and with the other, submits to the abstraction of ice and snow, would fulfil a mystery of ice-yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud indi-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation. Whereas vidual singleness, even while it loves and yields.

the West Africans, controlled by the burning death-abstrac-There was the other way, the remaining way. And he must tion of the Sahara, had been fulfilled in sun-destruction, the run to follow it. He thought of Ursula, how sensitive and putrescent mystery of sun-rays.

delicate she really was, her skin so over-fine, as if one skin Was this then all that remained? Was there left now noth-were wanting. She was really so marvellously gentle and sening but to break off from the happy creative being, was the sitive. Why did he ever forget it? He must go to her at once.

time up? Is our day of creative life finished? Does there re-He must ask her to marry him. They must marry at once, and main to us only the strange, awful afterwards of the knowl-so make a definite pledge, enter into a definite communion.

edge in dissolution, the African knowledge, but different in He must set out at once and ask her, this moment. There was us, who are blond and blue-eyed from the north?

no moment to spare.

Birkin thought of Gerald. He was one of these strange He drifted on swiftly to Beldover, half-unconscious of his white wonderful demons from the north, fulfilled in the de-own movement. He saw the town on the slope of the hill, not structive frost mystery. And was he fated to pass away in this straggling, but as if walled-in with the straight, final streets knowledge, this one process

of frost-knowledge, death by per-of miners' dwellings, making a great square, and it looked like fect cold? Was he a messenger, an omen of the universal dis-Jerusalem to his fancy. The world was all strange and transolution into whiteness and snow?

scendent.

Birkin was frightened. He was tired too, when he had Rosalind opened the door to him. She started slightly, as a reached this length of speculation. Suddenly his strange, young girl will, and said:

strained attention gave way, he could not attend to these mys-

'Oh, I'll tell father.'

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With which she disappeared, leaving Birkin in the hall, of the mystery, or it is uncreated.

looking at some reproductions from Picasso, lately introduced

'The weather's not so bad as it has been,' said Brangwen, by Gudrun. He was admiring the almost wizard, sensuous after waiting a moment. There was no connection between apprehension of the earth, when Will Brangwen appeared, the two men.

rolling down his shirt sleeves.

'No,' said Birkin. 'It was full moon two days ago.'

'Well,' said Brangwen, 'I'll get a coat.' And he too disap-

'Oh! You believe in the moon then, affecting the weather?'

peared for a moment. Then he returned, and opened the door

'No, I don't think I do. I don't really know enough about of the drawing-room, saying:

it.'

'You must excuse me, I was just doing a bit of work in the

'You know what they say? The moon and the weather may shed. Come inside, will you.'

change together, but the change of the moon won't change Birkin entered and sat down. He looked at the bright, red-the weather.'

dish face of the other man, at the narrow brow and the very

'Is that it?' said Birkin. 'I hadn't heard it.'

bright eyes, and at the rather sensual lips that unrolled wide There was a pause. Then Birkin said:

and expansive under the black cropped moustache. How cu-

'Am I hindering you? I called to see Ursula, really. Is she rious it was that this was a human being! What Brangwen at home?'

thought himself to be, how meaningless it was, confronted

'I don't believe she is. I believe she's gone to the library. I'll with the reality of him. Birkin could see only a strange, inex-just see.'

plicable, almost patternless collection of passions and desires Birkin could hear him enquiring in the diningroom.

and suppressions and traditions and mechanical ideas, all cast

'No,' he said, coming back. 'But she won't be long. You unfused and disunited into this slender, bright-faced man of wanted to speak to her?'

nearly fifty, who was as unresolved now as he was at twenty, Birkin looked across at the other man with curious calm, and as uncreated. How could he be the parent of Ursula, when clear eyes.

he was not created himself. He was not a parent. A slip of

'As a matter of fact,' he said, 'I wanted to ask her to marry living flesh had been transmitted through him, but the spirit me.'

had not come from him. The spirit had not come from any A point of light came on the golden-brown eyes of the ancestor, it had come out of the unknown. A child is the child elder man.

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'O-oh?' he said, looking at Birkin, then dropping his eyes

'You think so?'

before the calm, steadily watching look of the other: 'Was she

'Yes.'

expecting you then?'

'Ay, well that may be your way of looking at it.'

'No,' said Birkin.

Birkin, in silence, thought to himself: 'So it may. As for

'No? I didn't know anything of this sort was on foot—'

YOUR way of looking at it, William Brangwen, it needs a Brangwen smiled awkwardly.

little explaining.'

Birkin looked back at him, and said to himself: 'I wonder

'I suppose,' said Brangwen, 'you know what sort of people why it should be "on foot"!' Aloud he said: we are? What sort of a bringing-up she's had?'

'No, it's perhaps rather sudden.' At which, thinking of his

"She",' thought Birkin to himself, remembering his relationship with Ursula, he added—'but I don't know—'

childhood's corrections, 'is the cat's mother.'

'Quite sudden, is it? Oh!' said Brangwen, rather baffled

'Do I know what sort of a bringing-up she's had?' he said and annoyed.

aloud.

'In one way,' replied Birkin, '—not in another.'

He seemed to annoy Brangwen intentionally.

There was a moment's pause, after which Brangwen said:

'Well,' he said, 'she's had everything that's right for a girl

'Well, she pleases herself—'

to have—as far as possible, as far as we could give it her.'

'Oh yes!' said Birkin, calmly.

'I'm sure she has,' said Birkin, which caused a perilous full-A vibration came into Brangwen's strong voice, as he re-stop. The father was becoming exasperated. There was some-plied:

thing naturally irritant to him in Birkin's mere presence.

'Though I shouldn't want her to be in too big a hurry,

'And I don't want to see her going back on it all,' he said, either. It's no good looking round afterwards, when it's too in a clanging voice.

late.'

'Why?' said Birkin.

'Oh, it need never be too late,' said Birkin, 'as far as that This monosyllable exploded in Brangwen's brain like a shot.

goes.'

'Why! I don't believe in your new-fangled ways and new-

'How do you mean?' asked the father.

fangled ideas—in and out like a frog in a gallipot. It would

'If one repents being married, the marriage is at an end,'

never do for me.'

said Birkin.

Birkin watched him with steady emotionless eyes. The radi-

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cal antagnoism in the two men was rousing.

A queer painful light came into Birkin's eyes.

'Yes, but are my ways and ideas new-fangled?' asked Birkin.

'As to that,' he said, 'I only know that it's much more likely

'Are they?' Brangwen caught himself up. 'I'm not speak-that it's I who am at the beck and call of the woman, than she ing of you in particular,' he said. 'What I mean is that my at mine.'

children have been brought up to think and do according to Again there was a pause. The father was somewhat bewil-the religion I was brought up in myself, and I don't want to dered.

see them going away from THAT.'

'I know,' he said, 'she'll please herself—she always has done.

There was a dangerous pause.

I've done my best for them, but that doesn't matter. They've

'And beyond that—?' asked Birkin.

got themselves to please, and if they can help it they'll please The father hesitated, he was in a nasty position.

nobody BUT themselves. But she's a right to consider her

'Eh? What do you mean? All I want to say is that my mother, and me as well ___'

daughter'—he tailed off into silence, overcome by futility.

Brangwen was thinking his own thoughts.

He knew that in some way he was off the track.

'And I tell you this much, I would rather bury them, than

'Of course,' said Birkin, 'I don't want to hurt anybody or see them getting into a lot of loose ways such as you see ev-influence anybody. Ursula does exactly as she pleases.'

erywhere nowadays. I'd rather bury them—'

There was a complete silence, because of the utter failure

'Yes but, you see,' said Birkin slowly, rather wearily, bored in mutual understanding. Birkin felt bored. Her father was again by this new turn, 'they won't give either you or me the not a coherent human being, he was a roomful of old echoes.

chance to bury them, because they're not to be buried.'

The eyes of the younger man rested on the face of the elder.

Brangwen looked at him in a sudden flare of impotent Brangwen looked up, and saw Birkin looking at him. His face anger.

was covered with inarticulate anger and humiliation and sense

'Now, Mr Birkin,' he said, 'I don't know what you've come of inferiority in strength.

here for, and I don't know what you're asking for. But my

'And as for beliefs, that's one thing,' he said. 'But I'd rather daughters are my daughters—and it's my business to look see my daughters dead tomorrow than that they should be at after them while I can.'

the beck and call of the first man that likes to come and whistle Birkin's brows knitted suddenly, his eyes concentrated in for them.'

mockery. But he remained perfectly stiff and still. There was

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a pause.

reality, and within which she looked radiant as if in sunshine.

'I've nothing against your marrying Ursula,' Brangwen They heard her go into the diningroom, and drop her began at length. 'It's got nothing to do with

me, she'll do as armful of books on the table.

she likes, me or no me.'

'Did you bring me that Girl's Own?' cried Rosalind.

Birkin turned away, looking out of the window and let-

'Yes, I brought it. But I forgot which one it was you ting go his consciousness. After all, what good was this? It wanted.'

was hopeless to keep it up. He would sit on till Ursula came

'You would,' cried Rosalind angrily. 'It's right for a won-home, then speak to her, then go away. He would not accept der.'

trouble at the hands of her father. It was all unnecessary, and Then they heard her say something in a lowered tone.

he himself need not have provoked it.

'Where?' cried Ursula.

The two men sat in complete silence, Birkin almost un-Again her sister's voice was muffled.

conscious of his own whereabouts. He had come to ask her to Brangwen opened the door, and called, in his strong, bra-marry him—well then, he would wait on, and ask her. As for zen voice:

what she said, whether she accepted or not, he did not think

'Ursula.'

about it. He would say what he had come to say, and that was She appeared in a moment, wearing her hat.

all he was conscious of. He accepted the complete insignifi-

'Oh how do you do!' she cried, seeing Birkin, and all dazzled cance of this household, for him. But everything now was as as if taken by surprise. He wondered at her, knowing she was if fated. He could see one thing ahead, and no more. From aware of his presence. She had her queer, radiant, breathless the rest, he was absolved entirely for the time being. It had to manner, as if confused by the actual world, unreal to it, hav-be left to fate and chance to resolve the issues.

ing a complete bright world of her self alone.

At length they heard the gate. They saw her coming up

'Have I interrupted a conversation?' she asked.

the steps with a bundle of books under her arm. Her face was

'No, only a complete silence,' said Birkin.

bright and abstracted as usual, with the abstraction, that look

'Oh,' said Ursula, vaguely, absent. Their presence was not of being not quite THERE, not quite present to the facts of vital to her, she was withheld, she did not take them in. It was reality, that galled her father so much. She had a maddening a subtle insult that never failed to exasperate her father.

faculty of assuming a light of her own, which excluded the

'Mr Birkin came to speak to YOU, not to me,' said her

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father.

these times.

'Oh, did he!' she exclaimed vaguely, as if it did not con-

'Yes,' she said vaguely, in a doubting, absent voice.

cern her. Then, recollecting herself, she turned to him rather Birkin's heart contracted swiftly, in a sudden fire of bitter-radiantly, but still quite superficially, and said: 'Was it any-ness. It all meant nothing to her. He had been mistaken again.

thing special?'

She was in some self-satisfied world of her own. He and his

'I hope so,' he said, ironically.

hopes were accidentals, violations to her. It drove her father to

'—To propose to you, according to all accounts,' said her a pitch of mad exasperation. He had had to put up with this father.

all his life, from her.

'Oh,' said Ursula.

'Well, what do you say?' he cried.

'Oh,' mocked her father, imitating her. 'Have you nothing She winced. Then she glanced down at her father, half-more to say?'

frightened, and she said:

She winced as if violated.

'I didn't speak, did I?' as if she were afraid she might have

'Did you really come to propose to me?' she asked of Birkin, committed herself.

as if it were a joke.

'No,' said her father, exasperated. 'But you needn't look

'Yes,' he said. 'I suppose I came to propose.' He seemed to like an idiot. You've got your wits, haven't you?'

fight shy of the last word.

She ebbed away in silent hostility.

'Did you?' she cried, with her vague radiance. He might

'I've got my wits, what does that mean?' she repeated, in a have been saying anything whatsoever. She seemed pleased.

sullen voice of antagonism.

'Yes,' he answered. 'I wanted to—I wanted you to agree to

'You heard what was asked you, didn't you?' cried her fa-marry me.'

ther in anger.

She looked at him. His eyes were flickering with mixed

'Of course I heard.'

lights, wanting something of her, yet not wanting it. She shrank

'Well then, can't you answer?' thundered her father.

a little, as if she were exposed to his eyes, and as if it were a

'Why should I?'

pain to her. She darkened, her soul clouded over, she turned At the impertinence of this retort, he went stiff. But he aside. She had been driven out of her own radiant, single world.

said nothing.

And she dreaded contact, it was almost unnatural to her at

'No,' said Birkin, to help out the occasion, 'there's no need

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to answer at once. You can say when you like.'

road. He went in such a blithe drift of rage, that her mind Her eyes flashed with a powerful light.

wondered over him. He was ridiculous, but she was afraid of

'Why should I say anything?' she cried. 'You do this off him. She was as if escaped from some danger.

your OWN bat, it has nothing to do with me. Why do you Her father sat below, powerless in humiliation and cha-both want to bully me?'

grin. It was as if he were possessed with all the devils, after

'Bully you! Bully you!' cried her father, in bitter, rancor-one of these unaccountable conflicts with Ursula. He hated ous anger. 'Bully you! Why, it's a pity you can't be bullied her as if his only reality were in hating her to the last degree.

into some sense and decency. Bully you! YOU'LL see to that, He had all hell in his heart. But he went away, to escape you self-willed creature.'

himself. He knew he must despair, yield, give in to despair, She stood suspended in the middle of the room, her face and have done.

glimmering and dangerous. She was set in satisfied defiance.

Ursula's face closed, she completed herself against them Birkin looked up at her. He too was angry.

all. Recoiling upon herself, she became hard and self-com-

'But none is bullying you,' he said, in a very soft danger-pleted, like a jewel. She was bright and invulnerable, quite ous voice also.

free and happy, perfectly liberated in her self-possession. Her

'Oh yes,' she cried. 'You both want to force me into some-father had to learn

not to see her blithe obliviousness, or it thing.'

would have sent him mad. She was so radiant with all things,

'That is an illusion of yours,' he said ironically.

in her possession of perfect hostility.

'Illusion!' cried her father. 'A self-opinionated fool, that's She would go on now for days like this, in this bright what she is.'

frank state of seemingly pure spontaneity, so essentially oblivi-Birkin rose, saying:

ous of the existence of anything but herself, but so ready and

'However, we'll leave it for the time being.'

facile in her interest. Ah it was a bitter thing for a man to be And without another word, he walked out of the house.

near her, and her father cursed his fatherhood. But he must

'You fool! You fool!' her father cried to her, with extreme learn not to see her, not to know.

bitterness. She left the room, and went upstairs, singing to She was perfectly stable in resistance when she was in this herself. But she was terribly fluttered, as after some dreadful state: so bright and radiant and attractive in her pure opposi-fight. From her window, she could see Birkin going up the tion, so very pure, and yet mistrusted by everybody, disliked **Contents**



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on every hand. It was her voice, curiously clear and repellent, and despised them, and respected their activities even over-that gave her away. Only Gudrun was in accord with her. It much.

was at these times that the intimacy between the two sisters

'Of course,' she said easily, 'there is a quality of life in was most complete, as if their intelligence were one. They felt Birkin which is quite remarkable. There is an extraordinary a strong, bright bond of understanding between them, sur-rich spring of life in him, really amazing, the way he can give passing everything else. And during all these days of blind himself to things. But there are so many things in life that he bright abstraction and intimacy of his two daughters, the fa-simply doesn't know. Either he is not aware of their existence ther seemed to breathe an air of death, as if he were destroyed at all, or he dismisses them as merely negligible—things which in his very being. He was irritable to madness, he could not are vital to the other person. In a way, he is not clever enough, rest, his daughters seemed to be destroying him. But he was he is too intense in spots.'

inarticulate and helpless against them. He was forced to breathe

'Yes,' cried Ursula, 'too much of a preacher. He is really a the air of his own death. He cursed them in his soul, and only priest.'

wanted, that they should be removed from him.

'Exactly! He can't hear what anybody else has to say—he They continued radiant in their easy female transcendancy, simply cannot hear. His own voice is so loud.'

beautiful to look at. They exchanged confidences, they were

'Yes. He cries you down.'

intimate in their revelations to the last degree, giving each

'He cries you down,' repeated Gudrun. 'And by mere force other at last every secret. They withheld nothing, they told of violence. And of course it is hopeless. Nobody is convinced everything, till they were over the border of evil. And they by violence. It makes talking to him impossible—and living armed each other with knowledge, they extracted the subtlest with him I should think would be more than impossible.'

flavours from the apple of knowledge. It was curious how

'You don't think one could live with him' asked Ursula.

their knowledge was complementary, that of each to that of

'I think it would be too wearing, too exhausting. One would the other.

be shouted down every time, and rushed into his way with-Ursula saw her men as sons, pitied their yearning and ad-out any choice. He would want to control you entirely. He mired their courage, and wondered over them as a mother cannot allow that there is any other mind than his own. And wonders over her child, with a certain delight in their novelty.

then the real clumsiness of his mind is its lack of self-criti-But to Gudrun, they were the opposite camp. She feared them cism. No, I think it would be perfectly intolerable.'

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'Yes,' assented Ursula vaguely. She only half agreed with

'Doesn't he!' exclaimed Ursula, with a little ironical gri-Gudrun. 'The nuisance is,' she said, 'that one would find al-mace. 'Isn't he a little Lloyd George of the air!'

most any man intolerable after a fortnight.'

'Isn't he! Little Lloyd George of the air! That's just what

'It's perfectly dreadful,' said Gudrun. 'But Birkin—he is they are,' cried Gudrun in delight. Then for days, Ursula saw too positive. He couldn't bear it if you called your soul your the persistent, obtrusive birds as stout, short politicians lift-own. Of him that is strictly true.'

ing up their voices from the platform, little men who must

'Yes,' said Ursula. 'You must have HIS soul.'

make themselves heard at any cost.

'Exactly! And what can you conceive more deadly?' This But even from this there came the revulsion. Some yel-was all so true, that Ursula felt jarred to the bottom of her lowhammers suddenly shot along the road in front of her.

soul with ugly distaste.

And they looked to her so uncanny and inhuman, like flaring She went on, with the discord jarring and jolting through yellow barbs shooting through the air on some weird, living her, in the most barren of misery.

errand, that she said to herself: 'After all, it is impudence to Then there started a revulsion from Gudrun. She finished call them little Lloyd Georges. They are really unknown to life off so thoroughly, she made things so ugly and so final.

us, they are the unknown forces. It is impudence to look at As a matter of fact, even if it were as Gudrun said, about them as if they were the same as human beings. They are of Birkin, other things were true as well. But Gudrun would another world. How stupid anthropomorphism is! Gudrun is draw two lines under him and cross him out like an account really impudent, insolent, making herself the measure of ev-that is settled. There he was, summed up, paid for, settled, erything, making everything come down to human standards.

done with. And it was such a lie. This finality of Gudrun's, Rupert is quite right, human beings are boring, painting the this dispatching of people and things in a sentence, it was all universe with their own image. The universe is non-human, such a lie. Ursula began to revolt from her sister.

thank God.' It seemed to her irreverence, destructive of all One day as they were walking along the lane, they saw a true life, to make little Lloyd Georges of the birds. It was robin sitting on the top twig of a bush, singing shrilly. The such a lie towards the robins, and such a defamation. Yet she sisters stood to look at him. An ironical smile flickered on had done it herself. But under Gudrun's influence: so she Gudrun's face.

exonerated herself.

'Doesn't he feel important?' smiled Gudrun.

So she withdrew away from Gudrun and from that which

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she stood for, she turned in spirit towards Birkin again. She her. Let him be HER MAN utterly, and she in return would had not seen him since the fiasco of his proposal. She did not be his humble slave—whether she wanted it or not.

want to, because she did not want the question of her acceptance thrust upon her. She knew what Birkin meant when he asked her to marry him; vaguely, without putting it into speech, she knew. She knew what kind of love, what kind of surrender he wanted. And she was not at all sure that this was the kind of love that she herself wanted. She was not at all sure that it was this mutual unison in separateness that she wanted. She wanted unspeakable intimacies. She wanted to have him, utterly, finally to have him as her own, oh, so unspeakably, in intimacy. To drink him down—ah, like a life-draught. She made great professions, to herself, of her willingness to warm his footsoles between her breasts, after the fashion of the nauseous Meredith poem. But only on condition that he, her lover, loved her absolutely, with complete self-abandon. And subtly enough, she knew he would never abandon himself FINALLY to her. He did not believe in final self-abandonment. He said it openly. It was his challenge. She was prepared to fight him for it. For she believed in an absolute surrender to love. She believed that love far surpassed the individual. He said the individual was MORE than love, or than any relationship. For him, the bright, single soul accepted love as one of its conditions, a condition of its own equilibrium. She believed that love was EVERYTHING. Man must render himself up to her. He must be quaffed to the dregs by **Contents**



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want to run to town, he did not want to call on the Thirlbys.

He was suspended motionless, in an agony of inertia, like a machine that is without power.

This was very bitter to Gerald, who had never known what boredom was, who had gone from activity to activity, never at a loss. Now, gradually, everything seemed to be stopping in him. He did not want any more to do the things that offered.

Something dead within him just refused to respond to any suggestion. He cast over in his mind, what it would be pos-Chapter 20.

sible to do, to save himself from this misery of nothingness, relieve the stress of this hollowness. And there were only three *Gladiatorial*.

things left, that would rouse him, make him live. One was to drink or smoke hashish, the other was to be soothed by Birkin, After the fiasco of the proposal, Birkin had hurried blindly and the third was women. And there was no-one for the mo-away from Beldover, in a whirl of fury. He felt he had been a ment to drink with. Nor was there a woman. And he knew complete fool, that the whole scene had been a farce of the Birkin was out. So there was nothing to do but to bear the first water. But that did not trouble him at all. He was deeply, stress of his own emptiness.

mockingly angry that Ursula persisted always in this old cry: When he saw Birkin his face lit up in a sudden, wonder-

'Why do you want to bully me?' and in her bright, insolent ful smile.

abstraction.

'By God, Rupert,' he said, 'I'd just come to the conclusion He went straight to Shortlands. There he found Gerald that nothing in the world mattered except somebody to take standing with his back to the fire, in the library, as motionless the edge off one's being alone: the right somebody.'

as a man is, who is completely and emptily restless, utterly The smile in his eyes was very astonishing, as he looked at hollow. He had done all the work he wanted to do—and now the other man. It was the pure gleam of relief. His face was there was nothing. He could go out in the car, he could run to pallid and even haggard.

town. But he did not want to go out in the car, he did not

'The right woman, I suppose you mean,' said Birkin spite-

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fully.

exhaust themselves.'

'Of course, for choice. Failing that, an amusing man.'

'Do they? And then what?'

He laughed as he said it. Birkin sat down near the fire.

'Then you die,' said Gerald.

'What were you doing?' he asked.

'So you ought,' said Birkin.

'I? Nothing. I'm in a bad way just now, everything's on

'I don't see it,' replied Gerald. He took his hands out of his edge, and I can neither work nor play. I don't know whether trousers pockets, and reached for a cigarette. He was tense it's a sign of old age, I'm sure.'

and nervous. He lit the cigarette over a lamp, reaching for-

'You mean you are bored?'

ward and drawing steadily. He was dressed for dinner, as usual

'Bored, I don't know. I can't apply myself. And I feel the in the evening, although he was alone.

devil is either very present inside me, or dead.'

'There's a third one even to your two,' said Birkin. 'Work, Birkin glanced up and looked in his eyes.

love, and fighting. You forget the fight.'

'You should try hitting something,' he said.

'I suppose I do,' said Gerald. 'Did you ever do any box-Gerald smiled.

ing—?'

'Perhaps,' he said. 'So long as it was something worth hit-

'No, I don't think I did,' said Birkin.

ting.'

'Ay—' Gerald lifted his head and blew the smoke slowly

'Quite!' said Birkin, in his soft voice. There was a long into the air.

pause during which each could feel the presence of the other.

'Why?' said Birkin.

'One has to wait,' said Birkin.

'Nothing. I thought we might have a round. It is perhaps

'Ah God! Waiting! What are we waiting for?'

true, that I want something to hit. It's a suggestion.'

'Some old Johnny says there are three cures for ENNUI,

'So you think you might as well hit me?' said Birkin.

sleep, drink, and travel,' said Birkin.

'You? Well! Perhaps—! In a friendly kind of way, of course.'

'All cold eggs,' said Gerald. 'In sleep, you dream, in drink

'Quite!' said Birkin, bitingly.

you curse, and in travel you yell at a porter. No, work and love Gerald stood leaning back against the mantel-piece. He are the two. When you're not at work you should be in love.'

looked down at Birkin, and his eyes flashed with a sort of

'Be it then,' said Birkin.

terror like the eyes of a stallion, that are bloodshot and over-

'Give me the object,' said Gerald. 'The possibilities of love wrought, turned glancing backwards in a stiff terror.

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'I fell that if I don't watch myself, I shall find myself do-

'And you used to wrestle with a Jap?' he said. 'Did you ing something silly,' he said.

strip?'

'Why not do it?' said Birkin coldly.

'Sometimes.'

Gerald listened with quick impatience. He kept glancing

'You did! What was he like then, as a wrestler?'

down at Birkin, as if looking for something from the other

'Good, I believe. I am no judge. He was very quick and man.

slippery and full of electric fire. It is a remarkable thing, what

'I used to do some Japanese wrestling,' said Birkin. 'A Jap a curious sort of fluid force they seem to have in them, those lived in the same house with me in Heidelberg, and he taught people not like a human grip—like a polyp—'

me a little. But I was never much good at it.'

Gerald nodded.

'You did!' exclaimed Gerald. 'That's one of the things I've

'I should imagine so,' he said, 'to look at them. They repel never ever seen done. You mean jiu-jitsu, I suppose?'

me, rather.'

'Yes. But I am no good at those things—they don't inter-

'Repel and attract, both. They are very repulsive when they est me.'

are cold, and they look grey. But when they are hot and roused,

'They don't? They do me. What's the start?'

there is a definite attraction—a curious kind of full electric

'I'll show you what I can, if you like,' said Birkin.

fluid—like eels.'

'You will?' A queer, smiling look tightened Gerald's face

'Well—yes—probably.'

for a moment, as he said, 'Well, I'd like it very much.'

The man brought in the tray and set it down.

'Then we'll try jiu-jitsu. Only you can't do much in a

'Don't come in any more,' said Gerald.

starched shirt.'

The door closed.

'Then let us strip, and do it properly. Hold a minute—'

'Well then,' said Gerald; 'shall we strip and begin? Will He rang the bell, and

waited for the butler.

you have a drink first?'

'Bring a couple of sandwiches and a syphon,' he said to

'No, I don't want one.'

the man, 'and then don't trouble me any more tonight—or let

'Neither do I.'

anybody else.'

Gerald fastened the door and pushed the furniture aside.

The man went. Gerald turned to Birkin with his eyes The room was large, there was plenty of space, it was thickly lighted.

carpeted. Then he quickly threw off his clothes, and waited

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for Birkin. The latter, white and thin, came over to him. Birkin and throws, they became accustomed to each other, to each was more a presence than a visible object, Gerald was aware of other's rhythm, they got a kind of mutual physical under-him completely, but not really visually. Whereas Gerald

himself standing. And then again they had a real struggle. They seemed was concrete and noticeable, a piece of pure final substance.

to drive their white flesh deeper and deeper against each other,

'Now,' said Birkin, 'I will show you what I learned, and as if they would break into a oneness. Birkin had a great subtle what I remember. You let me take you so—' And his hands energy, that would press upon the other man with an un-closed on the naked body of the other man. In another mo-canny force, weigh him like a spell put upon him. Then it ment, he had Gerald swung over lightly and balanced against would pass, and Gerald would heave free, with white, heav-his knee, head downwards. Relaxed, Gerald sprang to his feet ing, dazzling movements.

with eyes glittering.

So the two men entwined and wrestled with each other,

'That's smart,' he said. 'Now try again.'

working nearer and nearer. Both were white and clear, but So the two men began to struggle together. They were Gerald flushed smart red where he was touched, and Birkin very dissimilar. Birkin was tall and narrow, his bones were remained white and tense. He seemed to penetrate into Gerald's very thin and fine. Gerald was much heavier and more plas-more solid, more diffuse bulk, to interfuse his body through tic. His bones were strong and round, his limbs were rounded, the body of the other, as if to bring it subtly into subjection, all his contours were beautifully and fully moulded. He seemed always seizing with some rapid necromantic fore-knowledge to stand with a proper, rich weight on the face of the earth, every motion of the other flesh, converting and counteracting whilst Birkin seemed to have the centre of gravitation in his it, playing upon the limbs and trunk of Gerald like some own middle. And Gerald had a rich, frictional kind of strength, hard wind. It was as if Birkin's whole physical intelligence rather mechanical, but sudden and invincible, whereas Birkin interpenetrated into Gerald's body, as if his fine, sublimated was abstract as to be almost intangible. He impinged invisenergy entered into the flesh of the fuller man, like some ibly upon the other man, scarcely seeming to touch him, like potency, casting a fine net, a prison, through the muscles into a garment, and then suddenly piercing in a tense fine grip the very depths of Gerald's physical being.

that seemed to penetrate into the very quick of Gerald's be-So they wrestled swiftly, rapturously, intent and mindless ing.

at last, two essential white figures working into a tighter closer They stopped, they discussed methods, they practised grips oneness of struggle, with a strange, octopus-like knotting and

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flashing of limbs in the subdued light of the room; a tense great hammerstroke resounding through the house? He did white knot of flesh gripped in silence between the walls of not know. And then it came to him that it was his own heart old brown books. Now and again came a sharp gasp of breath, beating. But that seemed impossible, the noise was outside.

or a sound like a sigh, then the rapid thudding of movement No, it was inside himself, it was his own heart. And the beat-on the thickly-carpeted floor, then the strange sound of flesh ing was painful, so strained, surcharged. He wondered if Gerald escaping under flesh. Often, in the white interlaced knot of heard it. He did not know whether he were standing or lying violent living being that swayed silently, there was no head to or falling.

be seen, only the swift, tight limbs, the solid white backs, the When he

realised that he had fallen prostrate upon Gerald's physical junction of two bodies clinched into oneness. Then body he wondered, he was surprised. But he sat up, steadying would appear the gleaming, ruffled head of Gerald, as the himself with his hand and waiting for his heart to become struggle changed, then for a moment the dun-coloured, stiller and less painful. It hurt very much, and took away his shadow-like head of the other man would lift up from the consciousness.

conflict, the eyes wide and dreadful and sightless.

Gerald however was still less conscious than Birkin. They At length Gerald lay back inert on the carpet, his breast waited dimly, in a sort of not-being, for many uncounted, rising in great slow panting, whilst Birkin kneeled over him, unknown minutes.

almost unconscious. Birkin was much more exhausted. He

'Of course—' panted Gerald, 'I didn't have to be rough—

caught little, short breaths, he could scarcely breathe any more.

with you—I had to keep back—my force—'

The earth seemed to tilt and sway, and a complete darkness Birkin heard the sound as if his own spirit stood behind was coming over his mind. He did not know what happened.

him, outside him, and listened to it. His body was in a trance He slid forward quite unconscious, over Gerald, and Gerald of exhaustion, his spirit heard thinly. His body could not did not notice. Then he was half-conscious again, aware only answer. Only he knew his heart was getting quieter. He was of the strange tilting and sliding of the world. The world was divided entirely between his spirit, which stood outside, and sliding, everything was sliding off into the darkness. And he knew, and his body, that was a plunging, unconscious stroke was sliding, endlessly, endlessly away.

of blood.

He came to consciousness again, hearing an immense

'I could have thrown you—using violence—' panted Gerald.

knocking outside. What could be happening, what was it, the

'But you beat me right enough.'

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'Yes,' said Birkin, hardening his throat and producing the and went towards the table. He poured out a whiskey and words in the tension there, 'you're much stronger than I—

soda. Gerald also came for a drink.

you could beat me—easily.'

'It was a real set-to, wasn't it?' said Birkin, looking at Gerald Then he relaxed again to the terrible plunging of his heart with darkened eyes.

and his blood.

'God, yes,' said Gerald. He looked at the delicate body of

'It surprised me,' panted Gerald, 'what strength you've got.

the other man, and added: 'It wasn't too much for you, was Almost supernatural.'

it?'

'For a moment,' said Birkin.

'No. One ought to wrestle and strive and be physically He still heard as if it were his own disembodied spirit close. It makes one sane.'

hearing, standing at some distance behind him. It drew nearer

'You do think so?'

however, his spirit. And the violent striking of blood in his

'I do. Don't you?'

chest was sinking quieter, allowing his mind to come back.

'Yes,' said Gerald.

He realised that he was leaning with all his weight on the soft There were long spaces of silence between their words.

body of the other man. It startled him, because he thought he The wrestling had some deep meaning to them—an unfin-had withdrawn. He recovered himself, and sat up. But he was ished meaning.

still vague and unestablished. He put out his hand to steady

'We are mentally, spiritually intimate, therefore we should himself. It touched the hand of Gerald, that was lying out on be more or less physically intimate too—it is more whole.'

the floor. And Gerald's hand closed warm and sudden over

'Certainly it is,' said Gerald. Then he laughed pleasantly, Birkin's, they remained exhausted and breathless, the one hand adding: 'It's rather

wonderful to me.' He stretched out his clasped closely over the other. It was Birkin whose hand, in arms handsomely.

swift response, had closed in a strong, warm clasp over the

'Yes,' said Birkin. 'I don't know why one should have to hand of the other. Gerald's clasp had been sudden and justify oneself.'

momentaneous.

'No.'

The normal consciousness however was returning, ebbing The two men began to dress.

back. Birkin could breathe almost naturally again. Gerald's

'I think also that you are beautiful,' said Birkin to Gerald, hand slowly withdrew, Birkin slowly, dazedly rose to his feet

'and that is enjoyable too. One should enjoy what is given.'

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'You think I am beautiful—how do you mean, physically?'

'I like it too.'

asked Gerald, his eyes glistening.

Birkin was silent, thinking how scrupulous Gerald was in

'Yes. You have a northern kind of beauty, like light re-his attire, how expensive too. He wore silk socks, and studs of fracted from snow—and a beautiful, plastic form. Yes, that is fine workmanship, and silk underclothing, and silk braces.

there to enjoy as well. We should enjoy everything.'

Curious! This was another of the differences between them.

Gerald laughed in his throat, and said:

Birkin was careless and unimaginative about his own appear-

'That's certainly one way of looking at it. I can say this ance.

much, I feel better. It has certainly helped me. Is this the

'Of course you,' said Gerald, as if he had been thinking; Bruderschaft you wanted?'

'there's something curious about you. You're curiously strong.

'Perhaps. Do you think this pledges anything?'

One doesn't expect it, it is rather surprising.'

'I don't know,' laughed Gerald.

Birkin laughed. He was looking at the handsome figure of

'At any rate, one feels freer and more open now—and that the other man, blond and comely in the rich robe, and he was is what we want.'

half thinking of the difference between it and himself—so

'Certainly,' said Gerald.

different; as far, perhaps, apart as man from woman, yet in They drew to the fire, with the decanters and the glasses another direction. But really it was Ursula, it was the woman and the food.

who was gaining ascendance over Birkin's being, at this mo-

'I always eat a little before I go to bed,' said Gerald. 'I ment. Gerald was becoming dim again, lapsing out of him.

sleep better.'

'Do you know,' he said suddenly, 'I went and proposed to

'I should not sleep so well,' said Birkin.

Ursula Brangwen tonight, that she should marry me.'

'No? There you are, we are not alike. I'll put a dressing-He saw the blank shining wonder come over Gerald's face.

gown on.' Birkin remained alone, looking at the fire. His mind

'You did?'

had reverted to Ursula. She seemed to return again into his

'Yes. Almost formally—speaking first to her father, as it consciousness. Gerald came down wearing a gown of broad-should be, in the world—though that was accident—or mis-barred, thick black-and-green silk, brilliant and striking.

chief.'

'You are very fine,' said Birkin, looking at the full robe.

Gerald only stared in wonder, as if he did not grasp.

'It was a caftan in Bokhara,' said Gerald. 'I like it.'

'You don't mean to say that you seriously went and asked

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her father to let you marry her?'

'But is this really true, as you say it now?'

'Yes,' said Birkin, 'I did.'

'Word for word.'

'What, had you spoken to her before about it, then?'

'It is?'

'No, not a word. I suddenly thought I would go there and He leaned back in his chair, filled with delight and amuse-ask her—and her father happened to come instead of her—so ment.

I asked him first.'

'Well, that's good,' he said. 'And so you came here to wrestle

'If you could have her?' concluded Gerald.

```
with your good angel, did you?'
'Ye-es, that.'
'Did I?' said Birkin.
'And you didn't speak to her?'
'Well, it looks like it. Isn't that what you did?'
'Yes. She came in afterwards. So it was put to her as well.'
Now Birkin could not follow Gerald's meaning.
'It was! And what did she say then? You're an engaged
'And what's going to happen?' said Gerald. 'You're going man?'
to keep open the proposition, so to speak?'
'No,—she only said she didn't want to be bullied into an-
'I suppose so. I vowed to myself I would see them all to swering.'
the devil. But I suppose I shall ask her again, in a little while.'
'She what?'
Gerald watched him steadily.
'Said she didn't want to be bullied into answering.'
'So you're fond of her then?' he asked.
"Said she didn't want to be bullied into answering!" Why,
'I think—I love her,' said Birkin, his face going very still what did she mean
by that?'
```

and fixed.

Birkin raised his shoulders. 'Can't say,' he answered. 'Didn't Gerald glistened for a moment with pleasure, as if it were want to be bothered just then, I suppose.'

something done specially to please him. Then his face as-

'But is this really so? And what did you do then?'

sumed a fitting gravity, and he nodded his head slowly.

'I walked out of the house and came here.'

'You know,' he said, 'I always believed in love—true love.

'You came straight here?'

But where does one find it nowadays?'

'Yes.'

'I don't know,' said Birkin.

Gerald stared in amazement and amusement. He could

'Very rarely,' said Gerald. Then, after a pause, 'I've never not take it in.

felt it myself—not what I should call love. I've gone after

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women—and been keen enough over some of them. But I've

'You doubt it?'

never felt LOVE. I don't believe I've ever felt as much LOVE

'Well—I begin to.'

for a woman, as I have for you—not LOVE. You understand There was a long pause.

what I mean?'

'Life has all kinds of things,' said Birkin. 'There isn't only

'Yes. I'm sure you've never loved a woman.'

one road.'

'You feel that, do you? And do you think I ever shall? You

'Yes, I believe that too. I believe it. And mind you, I don't understand what I mean?' He put his hand to his breast, clos-care how it is with me—I don't care how it is—so long as I ing his fist there, as if he would draw something out. 'I mean don't feel—' he paused, and a blank, barren look passed over that—that I can't express what it is, but I know it.'

his face, to express his feeling—'so long as I feel I've LIVED,

'What is it, then?' asked Birkin.

somehow—and I don't care how it is—but I want to feel that—

'You see, I can't put it into words. I mean, at any rate,

,

something abiding, something that can't change—'

'Fulfilled,' said Birkin.

His eyes were bright and puzzled.

'We-ell, perhaps it is fulfilled; I don't use the same words

'Now do you think I shall ever feel that for a woman?' he as you.'

'It is the same.'

said, anxiously.

Birkin looked at him, and shook his head.

'I don't know,' he said. 'I could not say.'

Gerald had been on the QUI VIVE, as awaiting his fate.

Now he drew back in his chair.

'No,' he said, 'and neither do I, and neither do I.'

'We are different, you and I,' said Birkin. 'I can't tell your life.'

'No,' said Gerald, 'no more can I. But I tell you—I begin to doubt it!'

'That you will ever love a woman?'

'Well—yes—what you would truly call love—'

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the glaze, but I don't like it. Gerald likes the man ploughing the best, his trousers are torn, he is ploughing with an ox, being I suppose a German peasant. It is all grey and white, white shirt and grey trousers, but very shiny and clean. Mr Birkin likes the girl best, under the hawthorn blossom, with a lamb, and with daffodils painted on her skirts, in the drawing room. But that is silly, because the lamb is not a real lamb, and she is silly too.

'Dear Miss Brangwen, are you coming back soon, you are Chapter 21.

very much missed here. I enclose a drawing of father sitting up in bed. He says he hopes you are not going to forsake us.

Threshold.

Oh dear Miss Brangwen, I am sure you won't. Do come back and draw the ferrets, they are the most lovely noble darlings Gudrun was away in London, having a little show of her in the world. We might carve them in holly-wood, playing work, with a friend, and looking round, preparing for flight against a background of green leaves. Oh do let us, for they from Beldover. Come what might she would be on the wing are most beautiful.

in a very short time. She received a letter from Winifred Crich,

'Father says we might have a studio. Gerald says we could ornamented with drawings.

easily have a beautiful one over the stables, it would only need

'Father also has been to London, to be examined by the windows to be put in the slant of the roof, which is a simple doctors. It made him very tired. They say he must rest a very matter. Then you could stay here all day and work, and we great deal, so he is mostly in bed. He brought me a lovely could live in the studio, like two real artists, like the man in tropical parrot in faience, of Dresden ware, also a man plough-the picture in the hall, with the frying-pan and the walls all ing, and two mice climbing up a stalk, also in faience. The covered with drawings. I long to be free, to live the free life of mice were Copenhagen ware. They are the best, but mice don't an artist. Even Gerald told father that only an artist is free, shine so much, otherwise they are very good, their tails are because he lives in a creative world of his own—'

slim and long. They all shine nearly like glass. Of course it is Gudrun caught the drift of the family intentions, in this

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letter. Gerald wanted her to be attached to the household at conscious she grew, till she was almost beside herself. She could Shortlands, he was using Winifred as his stalking-horse. The not get the idea out of her mind. It was as if some haunting father thought only of his child, he saw a rock of salvation in challenge prompted her, and she had not enough courage to Gudrun. And Gudrun admired him for his perspicacity. The take it up. So again she drifted into the green-houses, looking child, moreover, was really exceptional. Gudrun was quite at the lovely roses in their pots, and at the virginal cyclamens, content. She was quite willing, given a studio, to spend her and at the mystic white clusters of a creeper. The beauty, oh days at Shortlands. She disliked the Grammar School already the beauty of them, and oh the paradisal bliss, if she should thoroughly, she wanted to be free. If a studio were provided, have a perfect bouquet and could give it to Gudrun the next she would be free to go on with her work, she would await the day. Her passion

and her complete indecision almost made turn of events with complete serenity. And she was really inher ill.

terested in Winifred, she would be quite glad to understand At last she slid to her father's side.

the girl.

'Daddie—' she said.

So there was quite a little festivity on Winifred's account,

'What, my precious?'

the day Gudrun returned to Shortlands.

But she hung back, the tears almost coming to her eyes, in

'You should make a bunch of flowers to give to Miss her sensitive confusion. Her father looked at her, and his heart Brangwen when she arrives,' Gerald said smiling to his sister.

ran hot with tenderness, an anguish of poignant love.

'Oh no,' cried Winifred, 'it's silly.'

'What do you want to say to me, my love?'

'Not at all. It is a very charming and ordinary attention.'

'Daddie—!' her eyes smiled laconically—'isn't it silly if I

'Oh, it is silly,' protested Winifred, with all the extreme give Miss Brangwen some flowers when she comes?'

MAUVAISE HONTE of her years. Nevertheless, the idea The sick man looked at the bright, knowing eyes of his appealed to her. She wanted very much to carry it out. She child, and his heart burned with love.

flitted round the green-houses and the conservatory looking

'No, darling, that's not silly. It's what they do to queens.'

wistfully at the flowers on their stems. And the more she This was not very reassuring to Winifred. She half sus-looked, the more she LONGED to have a bunch of the blos-pected that queens in themselves were a silliness. Yet she so soms she saw, the more fascinated she became with her little wanted her little romantic occasion.

vision of ceremony, and the more consumedly shy and self-

'Shall I then?' she asked.

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'Give Miss Brangwen some flowers? Do, Birdie. Tell Wil-keen impatience in the schoolroom, looking down the drive son I say you are to have what you want.'

for Gudrun's arrival. It was a wet morning. Under her nose The child smiled a small, subtle, unconscious smile to was the strange fragrance of hot-house flowers, the bunch herself, in anticipation of her way.

was like a little fire to her, she seemed to have a strange new

'But I won't get them till tomorrow,' she said.

fire in her heart. This slight sense of romance stirred her like

'Not till tomorrow, Birdie. Give me a kiss then—'

an intoxicant.

Winifred silently kissed the sick man, and drifted out of At last she saw Gudrun coming, and she ran downstairs to the room. She again went the round of the green-houses and warn her father and Gerald. They, laughing at her anxiety the conservatory, informing the gardener, in her high, pe-and gravity, came with her into the hall. The manservant remptory, simple fashion, of what she wanted, telling him all came hastening to the door, and there he was, relieving Gudrun the blooms she had selected.

of her umbrella, and then of her raincoat. The welcoming

'What do you want these for?' Wilson asked.

party hung back till their visitor entered the hall.

'I want them,' she said. She wished servants did not ask Gudrun was flushed with the rain, her hair was blown in questions.

loose little curls, she was like a flower just opened in the rain,

'Ay, you've said as much. But what do you want them for, the heart of the blossom just newly visible, seeming to emit a for decoration, or to send away, or what?'

warmth of retained sunshine. Gerald winced in spirit, seeing

'I want them for a presentation bouquet.'

her so beautiful and unknown. She was wearing a soft blue

'A presentation bouquet! Who's coming then?—the dress, and her stockings were of dark red.

Duchess of Portland?'

Winifred advanced with odd, stately formality.

'No.'

'We are so glad you've come back,' she said. 'These are

'Oh, not her? Well you'll have a rare poppy-show if you your flowers.' She presented the bouquet.

put all the things you've mentioned into your bouquet.'

'Mine!' cried Gudrun. She was suspended for a moment,

'Yes, I want a rare poppy-show.'

then a vivid flush went over her, she was as if blinded for a

'You do! Then there's no more to be said.'

moment with a flame of pleasure. Then her eyes, strange and The next day Winifred, in a dress of silvery velvet, and flaming, lifted and looked at the father, and at Gerald. And holding a gaudy bunch of flowers in her hand, waited with again Gerald shrank in spirit, as if it would be more than he **Contents**



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could bear, as her hot, exposed eyes rested on him. There was

'Ah, come, come! We're not going to hear any of those something so revealed, she was revealed beyond bearing, to tales. Haven't we read notices in the newspaper, Gerald?'

his eyes. He turned his face aside. And he felt he would not

'You came off pretty well,' said Gerald to her, shaking be able to avert her. And he writhed under the imprison-hands. 'Did you sell anything?'

ment.

'No,' she said, 'not much.'

Gudrun put her face into the flowers.

'Just as well,' he said.

'But how beautiful they are!' she said, in a muffled voice.

She wondered what he meant. But she was all aglow with Then, with a strange, suddenly revealed passion, she stooped her reception, carried away by this little flattering ceremonial and kissed Winifred.

on her behalf.

Mr Crich went forward with his hand held out to her.

'Winifred,' said the father, 'have you a pair of shoes for

'I was afraid you were going to run away from us,' he said, Miss Brangwen? You had better change at once—'

playfully.

Gudrun went out with her bouquet in her hand.

Gudrun looked up at him with a luminous, roguish, un-

'Quite a remarkable young woman,' said the father to known face.

Gerald, when she had gone.

'Really!' she replied. 'No, I didn't want to stay in London.'

'Yes,' replied Gerald briefly, as if he did not like the obser-Her voice seemed to imply that she was glad to get back to vation.

Shortlands, her tone was warm and subtly caressing.

Mr Crich liked Gudrun to sit with him for half an hour.

'That is a good thing,' smiled the father. 'You see you are Usually he was ashy and wretched, with all the life gnawed very welcome here among us.'

out of him. But as soon as he rallied, he liked to make believe Gudrun only looked into his face with dark-blue, warm, that he was just as before, quite well and in the midst of shy eyes. She was unconsciously carried away by her own life—not of the outer world, but in the midst of a strong power.

essential life. And to this belief, Gudrun contributed per-

'And you look as if you came home in every possible tri-fectly. With her, he could get by stimulation those precious umph,' Mr Crich continued, holding her hand.

half-hours of strength and exaltation and pure freedom, when

'No,' she said, glowing strangely. 'I haven't had any tri-he seemed to live more than he had ever lived.

umph till I came here.'

She came to him as he lay propped up in the library. His

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face was like yellow wax, his eyes darkened, as it were sight-

'I would love some curacao—' said Gudrun, looking at the less. His black beard, now streaked with grey, seemed to spring sick man confidingly.

out of the waxy flesh of a corpse. Yet the atmosphere about

'You would. Well then Thomas, curacao—and a little cake, him was energetic and playful. Gudrun subscribed to this, or a biscuit?'

perfectly. To her fancy, he was just an ordinary man. Only his

'A biscuit,' said Gudrun. She did not want anything, but rather terrible appearance was photographed upon her soul, she was wise.

away beneath her consciousness. She knew that, in spite of his

'Yes.'

playfulness, his eyes could not change from their darkened He waited till she was settled with her little glass and her vacancy, they were the eyes of a man who is dead.

biscuit. Then he was satisfied.

'Ah, this is Miss Brangwen,' he said, suddenly rousing as

'You have heard the plan,' he said with some excitement, she entered, announced by the manservant. 'Thomas, put

'for a studio for Winifred, over the stables?'

Miss Brangwen a chair here—that's right.' He looked at her

'No!' exclaimed Gudrun, in mock wonder.

soft, fresh face with pleasure. It gave him the illusion of life.

'Oh!—I thought Winnie wrote it to you, in her letter!'

'Now, you will have a glass of sherry and a little piece of cake.

'Oh—yes—of course. But I thought perhaps it was only Thomas—'

her own little idea—' Gudrun smiled subtly, indulgently. The

'No thank you,' said Gudrun. And as soon as she had said sick man smiled also, elated.

it, her heart sank horribly. The sick man seemed to fall into a

'Oh no. It is a real project. There is a good room under the gap of death, at her contradiction. She ought to play up to roof of the stables—with sloping rafters. We had thought of him, not to contravene him. In an instant she was smiling her converting it into a studio.'

rather roguish smile.

'How VERY nice that would be!' cried Gudrun, with ex-

'I don't like sherry very much,' she said. 'But I like almost cited warmth. The thought of the rafters stirred her.

anything else.'

'You think it would? Well, it can be done.'

The sick man caught at this straw instantly.

'But how perfectly splendid for Winifred! Of course, it is

'Not sherry! No! Something else! What then? What is just what is needed, if she is to work at all seriously. One must there, Thomas?'

have one's workshop, otherwise one never ceases to be an ama-

'Port wine—curacao—'

teur.'

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'Is that so? Yes. Of course, I should like you to share it ing into the vacancy of his darkened eyes. It was not over yet, with Winifred.'

this process of death. She rose softly saying:

'Thank you SO much.'

'Perhaps you will sleep. I must look for Winifred.'

Gudrun knew all these things already, but she must look She went out, telling the nurse that she had left him. Day shy and very grateful, as if overcome. by day the tissue of the sick man was further and further

'Of course, what I should like best, would be if you could reduced, nearer and nearer the process came, towards the last give up your work at the Grammar School, and just avail your-knot which held the human being in its unity. But this knot self of the studio, and work there—well, as much or as little as was hard and unrelaxed, the will of the dying man never gave you liked—'

way. He might be dead in nine-tenths, yet the remaining tenth He looked at Gudrun with dark, vacant eyes. She looked remained unchanged, till it too was torn apart. With his will back at him as if full of gratitude. These phrases of a dying he held the unit of himself firm, but the circle of his power man were so complete and natural, coming like echoes through was ever and ever reduced, it would be reduced to a point at his dead mouth.

last, then swept away.

'And as to your earnings—you don't mind taking from me To adhere to life, he must adhere to human relationships, what you have taken from the Education Committee, do you?

and he caught at every straw. Winifred, the butler, the nurse, I don't want you to be a loser.'

Gudrun, these were the people who meant all to him, in these

'Oh,' said Gudrun, 'if I can have the studio and work there, last resources. Gerald, in his father's presence, stiffened with I can earn money enough, really I can.'

repulsion. It was so, to a less degree, with all the other chil-

'Well,' he said, pleased to be the benefactor, 'we can see dren except Winifred. They could not see anything but the about all that. You wouldn't mind spending your days here?'

death, when they looked at their father. It was as if some

'If there were a studio to work in,' said Gudrun, 'I could subterranean dislike

overcame them. They could not see the ask for nothing better.'

familiar face, hear the familiar voice. They were overwhelmed

'Is that so?'

by the antipathy of visible and audible death. Gerald could He was really very pleased. But already he was getting not breathe in his father's presence. He must get out at once.

tired. She could see the grey, awful semi-consciousness of mere And so, in the same way, the father could not bear the pres-pain and dissolution coming over him again, the torture com-ence of his son. It sent a final irritation through the soul of **Contents**



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the dying man.

tion, and was happy. Yet in her remoter soul, she knew as well The studio was made ready, Gudrun and Winifred moved as the adults knew: perhaps better.

in. They enjoyed so much the ordering and the appointing of Her father was quite well in his make-belief with her. But it. And now they need hardly be in the house at all. They had when she went away, he relapsed under the misery of his dis-their meals in the studio, they lived there safely. For the house solution. But still there were these bright moments, though was becoming

dreadful. There were two nurses in white, flit-as his strength waned, his faculty for attention grew weaker, ting silently about, like heralds of death. The father was con-and the nurse had to send Winifred away, to save him from fined to his bed, there was a come and go of SOTTO-VOCE

exhaustion.

sisters and brothers and children.

He never admitted that he was going to die. He knew it Winifred was her father's constant visitor. Every morning, was so, he knew it was the end. Yet even to himself he did not after breakfast, she went into his room when he was washed admit it. He hated the fact, mortally. His will was rigid. He and propped up in bed, to spend half an hour with him.

could not bear being overcome by death. For him, there was

'Are you better, Daddie?' she asked him invariably.

no death. And yet, at times, he felt a great need to cry out and And invariably he answered:

to wail and complain. He would have liked to cry aloud to

'Yes, I think I'm a little better, pet.'

Gerald, so that his son should be horrified out of his compo-She held his hand in both her own, lovingly and protec-sure. Gerald was instinctively aware of this, and he recoiled, tively. And this was very dear to him.

to avoid any such thing. This uncleanness of death repelled She ran in again as a rule at lunch time, to tell him the him too much. One should die quickly, like the Romans, one course of events, and every evening, when the curtains were should be master of one's fate in dying as in living. He was drawn, and his room was cosy, she spent a long time with convulsed in the clasp of this death of his father's, as in the him. Gudrun was gone home, Winifred was alone in the house: coils of the great serpent of Laocoon. The great serpent had she liked best to be with her father. They talked and prattled got the

father, and the son was dragged into the embrace of at random, he always as if he were well, just the same as when horrifying death along with him. He resisted always. And in he was going about. So that Winifred, with a child's subtle some strange way, he was a tower of strength to his father.

instinct for avoiding the painful things, behaved as if nothing The last time the dying man asked to see Gudrun he was serious was the matter. Instinctively, she withheld her atten-grey with near death. Yet he must see someone, he must, in **Contents**



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the intervals of consciousness, catch into connection with the

'I'm sure she has. She will do good things one day.'

living world, lest he should have to accept his own situation.

'Ah! Then her life won't be altogether wasted, you think?'

Fortunately he was most of his time dazed and half gone.

Gudrun was rather surprised.

And he spent many hours dimly thinking of the past, as it

'Sure it won't!' she exclaimed softly.

were, dimly re-living his old experiences. But there were times

'That's right.'

even to the end when he was capable of realising what was Again Gudrun waited for what he would say.

happening to him in the present, the death that was on him.

'You find life pleasant, it is good to live, isn't it?' he asked, And these were the times when he called in outside help, no with a pitiful faint smile that was almost too much for matter whose. For to realise this death that he was dying was Gudrun.

a death beyond death, never to be borne. It was an admission

'Yes,' she smiled—she would lie at random—'I get a pretty never to be made.

good time I believe.'

Gudrun was shocked by his appearance, and by the dark-

'That's right. A happy nature is a great asset.'

ened, almost disintegrated eyes, that still were unconquered Again Gudrun smiled, though her soul was dry with re-and firm.

pulsion. Did one have to die like this—having the life ex-

'Well,' he said in his weakened voice, 'and how are you tracted forcibly from one, whilst one smiled and made con-and Winifred getting on?'

versation to the end? Was there no other way? Must one go

'Oh, very well indeed,' replied Gudrun.

through all the horror of this victory over death, the triumph There were slight dead gaps in the conversation, as if the of the integral will, that would not be broken till it disap-ideas called up were only elusive straws floating on the dark peared utterly? One must, it was the only way. She admired chaos of the sick man's dying.

the self-possession and the control of the dying man exceed-

'The studio answers all right?' he said.

ingly. But she loathed the death itself. She was glad the ev-

'Splendid. It couldn't be more beautiful and perfect,' said eryday world held good, and she need not recognise anything Gudrun.

beyond.

She waited for what he would say next.

'You are quite all right here?—nothing we can do for you?—

'And you think Winifred has the makings of a sculptor?'

nothing you find wrong in your position?'

It was strange how hollow the words were, meaningless.

'Except that you are too good to me,' said Gudrun.

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'Ah, well, the fault of that lies with yourself,' he said, and did not move.

he felt a little exultation, that he had made this speech.

'He is very ill,' said Gudrun.

He was still so strong and living! But the nausea of death A small smile came over Winifred's face, subtle and scep-began to creep back on him, in reaction.

tical.

Gudrun went away, back to Winifred. Mademoiselle had

'I don't believe he will,' the child asserted, mockingly, and left, Gudrun stayed a good deal at Shortlands, and a tutor she moved away into the drive. Gudrun watched the isolated came in to carry on Winifred's education. But he did not live figure, and her heart stood still. Winifred was playing with a in the house, he was connected with the Grammar School.

little rivulet of water, absorbedly as if nothing had been said.

One day, Gudrun was to drive with Winifred and Gerald

'I've made a proper dam,' she said, out of the moist dis-and Birkin to town, in the car. It was a dark, showery day.

tance.

Winifred and Gudrun were ready and waiting at the door.

Gerald came to the door from out of the hall behind.

Winifred was very quiet, but Gudrun had not noticed. Sud-

'It is just as well she doesn't choose to believe it,' he said.

denly the child asked, in a voice of unconcern: Gudrun looked at him. Their eyes met; and they exchanged

'Do you think my father's going to die, Miss Brangwen?'

a sardonic understanding.

Gudrun started.

'Just as well,' said Gudrun.

'I don't know,' she replied.

He looked at her again, and a fire flickered up in his eyes.

'Don't you truly?'

'Best to dance while Rome burns, since it must burn, don't

'Nobody knows for certain. He MAY die, of course.'

you think?' he said.

The child pondered a few moments, then she asked: She was rather taken aback. But, gathering herself together,

'But do you THINK he will die?'

she replied:

It was put almost like a question in geography or science,

'Oh—better dance than wail, certainly.'

insistent, as if she would force an admission from the adult.

'So I think.'

The watchful, slightly triumphant child was almost diaboli-And they both felt the subterranean desire to let go, to cal.

fling away everything, and lapse into a sheer unrestraint, bru-

'Do I think he will die?' repeated Gudrun. 'Yes, I do.'

tal and licentious. A strange black passion surged up pure in But Winifred's large eyes were fixed on her, and the girl Gudrun. She felt strong. She felt her hands so strong, as if she

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could tear the world asunder with them. She remembered the will be in heaven, won't they—and ESPECIALLY my dar-abandonments of Roman licence, and her heart grew hot. She ling Lady Crich! Mrs Marshall, I say!'

knew she wanted this herself also—or something, something

'Yes, Miss Winifred?' said the woman, appearing at the equivalent. Ah, if that which was unknown and suppressed in door.

her were once let loose, what an orgiastic and satisfying event

'Oh do call this one Lady Winifred, if she turns out per-it would be. And she wanted it, she trembled slightly from fect, will you? Do tell Marshall to call it Lady Winifred.'

the proximity of the man, who stood just behind her, sugges-

'I'll tell him—but I'm afraid that's a gentleman puppy, tive of the same black

licentiousness that rose in herself. She Miss Winifred.'

wanted it with him, this unacknowledged frenzy. For a mo-

'Oh NO!' There was the sound of a car. 'There's Rupert!'

ment the clear perception of this preoccupied her, distinct cried the child, and she ran to the gate.

and perfect in its final reality. Then she shut it off completely, Birkin, driving his car, pulled up outside the lodge gate.

saying:

'We're ready!' cried Winifred. 'I want to sit in front with

'We might as well go down to the lodge after Winifred—

you, Rupert. May I?'

we can get in the care there.'

'I'm afraid you'll fidget about and fall out,' he said.

'So we can,' he answered, going with her.

'No I won't. I do want to sit in front next to you. It makes They found Winifred at the lodge admiring the litter of my feet so lovely and warm, from the engines.'

purebred white puppies. The girl looked up, and there was a Birkin helped her up, amused at sending Gerald to sit by rather ugly, unseeing cast in her eyes as she turned to Gerald Gudrun in the body of the car.

and Gudrun. She did not want to see them.

'Have you any news, Rupert?' Gerald called, as they rushed

'Look!' she cried. 'Three new puppies! Marshall says this along the lanes.

one seems perfect. Isn't it a sweetling? But it isn't so nice as its

'News?' exclaimed Birkin.

mother.' She turned to caress the fine white bull-terrier bitch

'Yes,' Gerald looked at Gudrun, who sat by his side, and that stood uneasily near her.

he said, his eyes narrowly laughing, 'I want to know whether

'My dearest Lady Crich,' she said, 'you are beautiful as an I ought to congratulate him, but I can't get anything definite angel on earth. Angel—angel—don't you think she's good out of him.'

enough and beautiful enough to go to heaven, Gudrun? They Gudrun flushed deeply.

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'Congratulate him on what?' she asked.

car ran through the mud.

'There was some mention of an engagement—at least, he

'What's the matter, really?' said Gerald, turning to Gudrun.

said something to me about it.'

This was an assumption of a sort of intimacy that irritated Gudrun flushed darkly.

Gudrun almost like an affront. It seemed to her that Gerald

'You mean with Ursula?' she said, in challenge.

was deliberately insulting her, and infringing on the decent

'Yes. That is so, isn't it?'

privacy of them all.

'I don't think there's any engagement,' said Gudrun, coldly.

'What is it?' she said, in her high, repellent voice. 'Don't

'That so? Still no developments, Rupert?' he called.

ask me!—I know nothing about ULTIMATE marriage, I

'Where? Matrimonial? No.'

assure you: or even penultimate.'

'How's that?' called Gudrun.

'Only the ordinary unwarrantable brand!' replied Gerald.

Birkin glanced quickly round. There was irritation in his

'Just so—same here. I am no expert on marriage, and degrees eyes also.

of ultimateness. It seems to be a bee that buzzes loudly in

'Why?' he replied. 'What do you think of it, Gudrun?'

Rupert's bonnet.'

'Oh,' she cried, determined to fling her stone also into the

'Exactly! But that is his trouble, exactly! Instead of want-pool, since they had begun, 'I don't think she wants an ening a woman for herself, he wants his IDEAS fulfilled. Which, gagement. Naturally, she's a bird that prefers the bush.'

when it comes to actual practice, is not good enough.'

Gudrun's voice was clear and gong-like. It reminded Rupert

'Oh no. Best go slap for what's womanly in woman, like a of her father's, so strong and vibrant.

bull at a gate.' Then he seemed to glimmer in himself. 'You

'And I,' said Birkin, his face playful but yet determined, 'I think love is the ticket, do you?' he asked.

want a binding contract, and am not keen on love, particu-

'Certainly, while it lasts—you only can't insist on perma-larly free love.'

nency,' came Gudrun's voice, strident above the noise.

They were both amused. WHY this public avowal? Gerald

'Marriage or no marriage, ultimate or penultimate or just seemed suspended a moment, in amusement.

so-so?—take the love as you find it.'

'Love isn't good enough for you?' he called.

'As you please, or as you don't please,' she echoed. 'Mar-

'No!' shouted Birkin.

riage is a social arrangement, I take it, and has nothing to do

'Ha, well that's being over-refined,' said Gerald, and the with the question of love.'

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His eyes were flickering on her all the time. She felt as is all breaks down—into nowhere.'

he were kissing her freely and malevolently. It made the colour

'Into Paradise, he says,' laughed Gerald.

burn in her cheeks, but her heart was quite firm and unfail-Gudrun shrugged her shoulders. 'FE M'EN FICHE of ing.

your Paradise!' she said.

'You think Rupert is off his head a bit?' Gerald asked.

'Not being a Mohammedan,' said Gerald. Birkin sat mo-Her eyes flashed with acknowledgment.

tionless, driving the car, quite unconscious of what they said.

'As regards a woman, yes,' she said, 'I do. There IS such a And Gudrun, sitting immediately behind him, felt a sort of thing as two people being in love for the whole of their lives—

ironic pleasure in thus exposing him.

perhaps. But marriage is neither here nor there, even then. If

'He says,' she added, with a grimace of irony, 'that you can they are in love, well and good. If not—why break eggs about find an eternal equilibrium in marriage, if you accept the it!'

unison, and still leave yourself separate, don't try to fuse.'

'Yes,' said Gerald. 'That's how it strikes me. But what about

'Doesn't inspire me,' said Gerald.

Rupert?'

'That's just it,' said Gudrun.

'I can't make out—neither can he nor anybody. He seems

'I believe in love, in a real ABANDON, if you're capable to think that if you marry you can get through marriage into of it,' said Gerald.

a third heaven, or something—all very vague.'

'So do I,' said she.

'Very! And who wants a third heaven? As a matter of fact,

'And so does Rupert, too—though he is always shouting.'

Rupert has a great yearning to be SAFE—to tie himself to

'No,' said Gudrun. 'He won't abandon himself to the other the mast.'

person. You can't be sure of him. That's the trouble I think.'

'Yes. It seems to me he's mistaken there too,' said Gudrun.

'Yet he wants marriage! Marriage—ET PUIS?'

'I'm sure a mistress is more likely to be faithful than a wife—

'Le paradis!' mocked Gudrun.

just because she is her OWN mistress. No—he says he be-Birkin, as he drove, felt a creeping of the spine, as if some-lieves that a man and wife can go further than any other two body was threatening his neck. But he shrugged with indif-beings—but WHERE, is not explained. They can know each ference. It began to rain. Here was a change. He stopped the other, heavenly and hellish, but particularly hellish, so per-car and got down to put up the hood.

fectly that they go beyond heaven and hell—into—there it

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Hermione's long, grave, downward-looking face. There was something of the stupidity and the unenlightened self-esteem of a horse in it. 'She's got a horse-face,' Ursula said to herself, 'she runs between blinkers.' It did seem as if Hermione, like the moon, had only one side to her penny. There was no obverse. She stared out all the time on the narrow, but to her, complete world of the extant consciousness. In the darkness, she did not exist. Like the moon, one half of her was lost to life. Her self was all in her head, she did not know what it was Chapter 22.

spontaneously to run or move, like a fish in the water, or a weasel on the grass. She must always KNOW.

Woman to woman.

But Ursula only suffered from Hermione's one-sidedness.

She only felt Hermione's cool evidence, which seemed to put They came to the town, and left Gerald at the railway her down as nothing. Hermione, who brooded and brooded station. Gudrun and Winifred were to come to tea with Birkin, till she was exhausted with the ache of her effort at conscious-who expected Ursula also. In the afternoon, however, the first ness, spent and ashen in her body, who gained so slowly and person to turn up was Hermione. Birkin was out, so she went with such effort her final and barren conclusions of knowl-in the drawing-room, looking at his books and papers, and edge, was apt, in the presence of other women, whom she playing on the piano. Then Ursula arrived. She was surprised, thought simply female, to wear the conclusions of her bitter unpleasantly so, to see Hermione, of whom she had heard assurance like jewels which conferred on her an unquestion-nothing for some time.

able distinction, established her in a higher order of life. She

'It is a surprise to see you,' she said.

was apt, mentally, to condescend to women such as Ursula,

'Yes,' said Hermione—'I've been away at Aix—'

whom she regarded as purely emotional. Poor Hermione, it

'Oh, for your health?'

was her one possession, this aching certainty of hers, it was

'Yes.'

her only justification. She must be confident here, for God The two women looked at each other. Ursula resented knows, she felt rejected and deficient

enough elsewhere. In

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the life of thought, of the spirit, she was one of the elect. And do you think you will marry?'

she wanted to be universal. But there was a devastating cyni-The question was so calm and mild, so simple and bare cism at the bottom of her. She did not believe in her own and dispassionate that Ursula was somewhat taken aback, rather universals—they were sham. She did not believe in the inner attracted. It pleased her almost like a wickedness. There was life—it was a trick, not a reality. She did not believe in the some delightful naked irony in Hermione.

spiritual world—it was an affectation. In the last resort, she

'Well,' replied Ursula, 'HE wants to, awfully, but I'm not believed in Mammon, the flesh, and the devil—these at least so sure.'

were not sham. She was a priestess without belief, without Hermione watched her with slow calm eyes. She noted conviction, suckled in a creed outworn, and condemned to this new expression of vaunting. How she envied Ursula a the reiteration of mysteries that were not divine to her. Yet certain unconscious positivity! even her vulgarity!

there was no escape. She was a leaf upon a dying tree. What

'Why aren't you sure?' she asked, in her easy sing song.

help was there then, but to fight still for the old, withered She was perfectly at her ease, perhaps even rather happy in truths, to die for the old, outworn belief, to be a sacred and this conversation. 'You don't really love him?'

inviolate priestess of desecrated mysteries? The old great truths Ursula flushed a little at the mild impertinence of this BAD been true. And she was a leaf of the old great tree of question. And yet she could not definitely take offence.

knowledge that was withering now. To the old and last truth Hermione seemed so calmly and sanely candid. After all, it then she must be faithful even though cynicism and mockery was rather great to be able to be so sane.

took place at the bottom of her soul.

'He says it isn't love he wants,' she replied.

'I am so glad to see you,' she said to Ursula, in her slow

'What is it then?' Hermione was slow and level.

voice, that was like an incantation. 'You and Rupert have be-

'He wants me really to accept him in marriage.'

come quite friends?'

Hermione was silent for some time, watching Ursula with

'Oh yes,' said Ursula. 'He is always somewhere in the back-slow, pensive eyes.

ground.'

'Does he?' she said at length, without expression. Then, Hermione paused

before she answered. She saw perfectly rousing, 'And what is it you don't want? You don't want mar-well the other woman's vaunt: it seemed truly vulgar.

riage?'

'Is he?' she said slowly, and with perfect equanimity. 'And

'No—I don't—not really. I don't want to give the sort of

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SUBMISSION he insists on. He wants me to give myself He doesn't want real warm intimacy—he won't have it—he up—and I simply don't feel that I CAN do it.'

rejects it. He won't let me think, really, and he won't let me Again there was a long pause, before Hermione replied: FEEL—he hates feelings.'

'Not if you don't want to.' Then again there was silence.

There was a long pause, bitter for Hermione. Ah, if only Hermione shuddered with a strange desire. Ah, if only he would have made this demand of her? Her he DROVE

had asked HER to subserve him, to be his slave! She shud-into thought, drove

inexorably into knowledge—and then dered with desire.

execrated her for it.

'You see I can't—'

'He wants me to sink myself,' Ursula resumed, 'not to have

'But exactly in what does—'

any being of my own—'

They had both begun at once, they both stopped. Then,

'Then why doesn't he marry an odalisk?' said Hermione in Hermione, assuming priority of speech, resumed as if wea-her mild sing-song, 'if it is that he wants.' Her long face looked rily:

sardonic and amused.

'To what does he want you to submit?'

'Yes,' said Ursula vaguely. After all, the tiresome thing was,

'He says he wants me to accept him non-emotionally, and he did not want an odalisk, he did not want a slave. Hermione finally—I really don't know what he means. He says he wants would have been his slave—there was in her a horrible desire the demon part of himself to be mated—physically—not the to prostrate herself before a man—a man who worshipped human being. You see he says one thing one day, and another her, however, and admitted her as the supreme thing. He did the next—and he always contradicts himself—'

not want an odalisk. He wanted a woman to TAKE some-

'And always thinks about himself, and his own dissatisfac-thing from him, to give herself up so much that she could tion,' said Hermione slowly.

take the last realities of him, the last facts, the last physical

'Yes,' cried Ursula. 'As if there were no-one but himself facts, physical and unbearable.

concerned. That makes it so impossible.'

And if she did, would he acknowledge her? Would he be But immediately she began to retract.

able to acknowledge her through everything, or would he use

'He insists on my accepting God knows what in HIM,'

her just as his instrument, use her for his own private satisfac-she resumed. 'He wants me to accept HIM as—as an abso-tion, not admitting her? That was what the other men had lute—But it seems to me he doesn't want to GIVE anything.

done. They had wanted their own show, and they would not

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admit her, they turned all she was into nothingness. Just as through with him. We have been together so long, I really do Hermione now betrayed herself as a woman. Hermione was know him, I DO know what he is. And I feel I must say it; I like a man, she believed only in men's things. She betrayed feel it would be perfectly DISASTROUS for you to marry the woman in herself.

And Birkin, would he acknowledge, or him—for you even more than for him.' Hermione lapsed into would he deny her?

bitter reverie. 'He is so uncertain, so unstable—he wearies,

'Yes,' said Hermione, as each woman came out of her own and then reacts. I couldn't TELL you what his reactions are.

separate reverie. 'It would be a mistake—I think it would be a I couldn't TELL you the agony of them. That which he af-mistake—'

firms and loves one day—a little latter he turns on it in a fury

'To marry him?' asked Ursula.

of destruction. He is never constant, always this awful, dread-

'Yes,' said Hermione slowly—'I think you need a man—

ful reaction. Always the quick change from good to bad, bad soldierly, strong-willed—' Hermione held out her hand and to good. And nothing is so devastating, nothing—'

clenched it with rhapsodic intensity. 'You should have a man

'Yes,' said Ursula humbly, 'you must have suffered.'

like the old heroes—you need to stand behind him as he goes An unearthly light came on Hermione's face. She clenched into battle, you need to SEE his strength, and to HEAR his her hand like one inspired.

shout—. You need a man physically strong, and virile in his

'And one must be willing to suffer—willing to suffer for will, NOT a sensitive man—.' There was a break, as if the him hourly, daily—if you are going to help him, if he is to pythoness had uttered the oracle, and now the woman went keep true to anything at all—'

on, in a rhapsody-wearied voice: 'And you see, Rupert isn't

'And I don't WANT to suffer hourly and daily,' said this, he isn't. He is frail in health and body, he needs great, Ursula. 'I don't, I should be ashamed. I think it is degrading great care. Then he is so changeable and unsure of himself— not to be happy.'

it requires the greatest patience and understanding to help Hermione stopped and looked at her a long time.

him. And I don't think you are patient. You would have to be

'Do you?' she said at last. And this utterance seemed to prepared to suffer—dreadfully. I can't TELL you how much her a mark of Ursula's far distance from herself. For to suffering it would take to make him happy. He lives an IN-Hermione suffering was the greatest reality, come what might.

TENSELY spiritual life, at times—too, too wonderful. And Yet she too had a creed of happiness.

then come the reactions. I can't speak of what I have been

'Yes,' she said. 'One SHOULD be happy—' But it was a

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matter of will.

it is YOU who want a physically strong, bullying man, not I.

'Yes,' said Hermione, listlessly now, 'I can only feel that it It is you who want an unsensitive man, not I. You DON'T

would be disastrous, disastrous—at least, to marry in a hurry.

know anything about Rupert, not really, in spite of the years Can't you be together without marriage? Can't you go away you have had with him. You don't give him a woman's love, and live somewhere without marriage? I do feel that marriage you give him an ideal love, and that is why he reacts away would be fatal, for both of you. I think for you even more from you. You don't know. You only know the dead things.

than for him—and I think of his health—'

Any kitchen maid would know something about him, you

'Of course,' said Ursula, 'I don't care about marriage—it don't know. What do you think your knowledge is but dead isn't really important to me—it's he who wants it.'

understanding, that doesn't mean a thing. You are so false,

'It is his idea for the moment,' said Hermione, with that and untrue, how could you know anything? What is the good weary finality, and a sort of SI JEUNESSE SAVAIT infalli-of your talking about love—you untrue spectre of a woman!

bility.

How can you know anything, when you don't believe? You There was a pause. Then Ursula broke into faltering chal-don't believe in yourself and your own womanhood, so what lenge.

good is your conceited, shallow cleverness—!'

'You think I'm merely a physical woman, don't you?'

The two women sat on in antagonistic silence. Hermione

'No indeed,' said Hermione. 'No, indeed! But I think you felt injured, that all her good intention, all her offering, only are vital and young—it isn't a question of years, or even of left the other woman in vulgar antagonism. But then, Ursula experience—it is almost a question of race. Rupert is race-could not understand, never would understand, could never old, he comes of an old race—and you seem to me so young, be more than the usual jealous and unreasonable female, with you come of a young, inexperienced race.'

a good deal of powerful female emotion, female attraction,

'Do I!' said Ursula. 'But I think he is awfully young, on and a fair amount of female understanding, but no mind.

one side.'

Hermione had decided long ago that where there was no mind,

'Yes, perhaps childish in many respects. Nevertheless—'

it was useless to appeal for reason—one had merely to ignore They both lapsed into silence. Ursula was filled with deep the ignorant. And Rupert—he had now reacted towards the resentment and a touch of hopelessness. 'It isn't true,' she said strongly female, healthy, selfish woman—it was his reaction to herself, silently addressing her adversary. 'It isn't true. And for the time being—there was no helping it all. It was all a **Contents**



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foolish backward and forward, a violent oscillation that would Gudrun did not appear.

at length be too violent for his coherency, and he would smash

'I think I shall go to Florence for the winter,' said Hermione and be dead. There was no saving him. This violent and at length.

directionless reaction between animalism and spiritual truth

'Will you?' he answered. 'But it is so cold there.'

would go on in him till he tore himself in two between the

'Yes, but I shall stay with Palestra. It is quite comfort-opposite directions, and disappeared meaninglessly out of life.

able.'

It was no good—he too was without unity, without MIND,

'What takes you to Florence?'

in the ultimate stages of living; not quite man enough to

'I don't know,' said Hermione slowly. Then she looked at make a destiny for a woman.

him with her slow, heavy gaze. 'Barnes is starting his school of They sat on till Birkin came in and found them together.

aesthetics, and Olandese is going to give a set of discourses on He felt at once the antagonism in the atmosphere, something the Italian national policy-'

radical and insuperable, and he bit his lip. But he affected a

'Both rubbish,' he said.

bluff manner.

'No, I don't think so,' said Hermione.

'Hello, Hermione, are you back again? How do you feel?'

'Which do you admire, then?'

'Oh, better. And how are you—you don't look well—'

'I admire both. Barnes is a pioneer. And then I am inter-

'Oh!—I believe Gudrun and Winnie Crich are coming in ested in Italy, in her coming to national consciousness.'

to tea. At least they said they were. We shall be a tea-party.

'I wish she'd come to something different from national What train did you come by, Ursula?'

consciousness, then,' said Birkin; 'especially as it only means a It was rather annoying to see him trying to placate both sort of commercial-industrial consciousness. I hate Italy and women at once. Both women watched him, Hermione with her national rant. And I think Barnes is an amateur.'

deep resentment and pity for him, Ursula very impatient. He Hermione was silent for some moments, in a state of hos-was nervous and apparently in quite good spirits, chattering tility. But yet, she had got Birkin back again into her world!

the conventional commonplaces. Ursula was amazed and in-How subtle her influence was, she seemed to start his irri-dignant at the way he made small-talk; he was adept as any table attention into her direction exclusively, in one minute.

FAT in Christendom. She became quite stiff, she would not He was her creature.

answer. It all seemed to her so false and so belittling. And still

'No,' she said, 'you are wrong.' Then a sort of tension came

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over her, she raised her face like the pythoness inspired with any longer. When the door was opened, the cat walked in.

oracles, and went on, in rhapsodic manner: 'Il Sandro mi scrive

'Micio! Micio!' called Hermione, in her slow, deliberate che ha accolto il piu grande entusiasmo, tutti i giovani, e sing-song. The young cat turned to look at her, then, with his fanciulle e ragazzi, sono tutti—' She went on in Italian, as if, slow and stately walk he advanced to her side.

in thinking of the Italians she thought in their language.

'Vieni—vieni qua,' Hermione was saying, in her strange He listened with a shade of distaste to her rhapsody, then caressive, protective voice, as if she were always the elder, the he said:

mother superior. 'Vieni dire Buon' Giorno alla zia. Mi ricorde,

'For all that, I don't like it. Their nationalism is just indus-mi ricorde benenon he vero, piccolo? E vero che mi ricordi?

trialism—that and a shallow jealousy I detest so much.'

E vero?' And slowly she rubbed his head, slowly and with

'I think you are wrong—I think you are wrong—' said ironic indifference.

Hermione. 'It seems to me purely spontaneous and beautiful,

'Does he understand Italian?' said Ursula, who knew noth-the modern Italian's PASSION, for it is a passion, for Italy, ing of the language.

L'Italia—'

'Yes,' said Hermione at length. 'His mother was Italian.

'Do you know Italy well?' Ursula asked of Hermione.

She was born in my waste-paper basket in Florence, on the Hermione hated to be broken in upon in this manner. Yet she morning of Rupert's birthday. She was his birthday present.'

answered mildly:

Tea was brought in. Birkin poured out for them. It was

'Yes, pretty well. I spent several years of my girlhood there, strange how inviolable was the intimacy which existed be-with my mother. My mother died in Florence.'

tween him and Hermione. Ursula felt that she was an out-

'Oh.'

sider. The very tea-cups and the old silver was a bond be-There was a pause, painful to Ursula and to Birkin.

tween Hermione and Birkin. It seemed to belong to an old, Hermione however seemed abstracted and calm. Birkin was past world which they had inhabited together, and in which white, his eyes glowed as if he were in a fever, he was far too Ursula was a foreigner. She was almost a parvenue in their old overwrought. How Ursula suffered in this tense atmosphere cultured

milieu. Her convention was not their convention, of strained wills! Her head seemed bound round by iron their standards were not her standards. But theirs were estab-bands.

lished, they had the sanction and the grace of age. He and she Birkin rang the bell for tea. They could not wait for Gudrun together, Hermione and Birkin, were people of the same old

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tradition, the same withered deadening culture. And she, ing, humorous singsong.

Ursula, was an intruder. So they always made her feel.

'Ti imparano fare brutte cose, brutte cose—'

Hermione poured a little cream into a saucer. The simple She lifted the Mino's white chin on her forefinger, slowly.

way she assumed her rights in Birkin's room maddened and The young cat looked round with a supremely forbearing air, discouraged Ursula. There was a fatality about it, as if it were avoided seeing anything, withdrew his chin, and began to wash bound to be. Hermione lifted the cat and put the cream behis face with his paw. Hermione grunted her laughter, pleased.

fore him. He planted his two paws on the edge of the table

'Bel giovanotto—' she said.

and bent his gracious young head to drink.

The cat reached forward again and put his fine white paw

'Siccuro che capisce italiano,' sang Hermione, 'non l'avra on the edge of the saucer. Hermione lifted it down with deli-dimenticato, la lingua della Mamma.'

cate slowness. This deliberate, delicate carefulness of move-She lifted the cat's head with her long, slow, white fingers, ment reminded Ursula of Gudrun.

not letting him drink, holding him in her power. It was al-

'No! Non e permesso di mettere il zampino nel tondinetto.

ways the same, this joy in power she manifested, peculiarly in Non piace al babbo. Un signor gatto cosi selvatico—!'

power over any male being. He blinked forbearingly, with a And she kept her finger on the softly planted paw of the male, bored expression, licking his whiskers. Hermione laughed cat, and her voice had the same whimsical, humorous note of in her short, grunting fashion.

bullying.

'Ecco, il bravo ragazzo, come e superbo, questo!'

Ursula had her nose out of joint. She wanted to go away She made a vivid picture, so calm and strange with the cat.

now. It all seemed no good. Hermione was established for She had a true static impressiveness, she was a social artist in ever, she herself was ephemeral and had not yet even arrived.

some ways.

'I will go now,' she said suddenly.

The cat refused to look at her, indifferently avoided her Birkin looked at her almost in fear—he so dreaded her fingers, and began to drink again, his nose down to the cream, anger. 'But there is no need for such hurry,' he said.

perfectly balanced, as he lapped with his odd little click.

'Yes,' she answered. 'I will go.' And turning to Hermione,

'It's bad for him, teaching him to eat at table,' said Birkin.

before there was time to say any more, she held out her hand

'Yes,' said Hermione, easily assenting.

and said 'Good-bye.'

Then, looking down at the cat, she resumed her old, mock-

'Good-bye—' sang Hermione, detaining the band. 'Must

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you really go now?'

'Yes, I think I'll go,' said Ursula, her face set, and averted from Hermione's eyes.

'You think you will—'

But Ursula had got her hand free. She turned to Birkin with a quick, almost jeering: 'Good-bye,' and she was opening the door before he had time to do it for her.

When she got outside the house she ran down the road in fury and agitation. It was strange, the unreasoning rage and violence Hermione roused in her, by her very presence. Ursula knew she gave herself away to the other woman, she knew she Chapter 23.

looked ill-bred, uncouth, exaggerated. But she did not care.

Excurse.

She only ran up the road, lest she should go back and jeer in the faces of the two she had left behind. For they outraged Next day Birkin sought Ursula out. It happened to be the her.

half-day at the Grammar School. He appeared towards the end of the morning, and asked her, would she drive with him in the afternoon. She consented. But her face was closed and unresponding, and his heart sank.

The afternoon was fine and dim. He was driving the motor-car, and she sat beside him. But still her face was closed against him, unresponding. When she became like this, like a wall against him, his heart contracted.

His life now seemed so reduced, that he hardly cared any more. At moments it seemed to him he did not care a straw whether Ursula or Hermione or anybody else existed or did not exist. Why bother! Why strive for a coherent, satisfied

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life? Why not drift on in a series of accidents-like a picaresque

'You like that best?' he said.

novel? Why not? Why bother about human relationships?

'I think I do.'

Why take them seriously-male or female? Why form any

'I like the sapphire,' he said.

serious connections at all? Why not be casual, drifting along,

'This?'

taking all for what it was worth?

It was a rose-shaped, beautiful sapphire, with small bril-And yet, still, he was damned and doomed to the old ef-liants.

fort at serious living.

'Yes,' she said, 'it is lovely.' She held it in the light. 'Yes,

'Look,' he said, 'what I bought.' The car was running along perhaps it IS the best-'

a broad white road, between autumn trees.

'The blue-' he said.

He gave her a little bit of screwed-up paper. She took it

'Yes, wonderful-'

and opened it.

He suddenly swung the car out of the way of a farm-cart.

'How lovely,' she cried.

It tilted on the bank. He was a careless driver, yet very quick.

She examined the gift.

But Ursula was frightened. There was always that something

'How perfectly lovely!' she cried again. 'But why do you regardless in him which terrified her. She suddenly felt he give them me?' She put the question offensively.

might kill her, by making some dreadful accident with the His face flickered with bored irritation. He shrugged his motor-car. For a moment she was stony with fear.

shoulders slightly.

'Isn't it rather dangerous, the way you drive?' she asked

'I wanted to,' he said, coolly.

him.

'But why? Why should you?'

'No, it isn't dangerous,' he said. And then, after a pause:

'Am I called on to find reasons?' he asked.

'Don't you like the yellow ring at all?'

There was a silence, whilst she examined the rings that It was a squarish topaz set in a frame of steel, or some had been screwed up in the paper.

other similar mineral, finely wrought.

'I think they are BEAUTIFUL,' she said, 'especially this.

'Yes,' she said, 'I do like it. But why did you buy these This is wonderful-' rings?'

It was a round opal, red and fiery, set in a circle of tiny

'I wanted them. They are second-hand.'

rubies.

'You bought them for yourself?'

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'No. Rings look wrong on my hands.'

ring finger. And she was superstitious. No, there was ill-por-

'Why did you buy them then?'

tent enough, she would not accept this ring from him in pledge.

'I bought them to give to you.'

'Look,' she said, putting forward her hand, that was half-

'But why? Surely you ought to give them to Hermione!

closed and shrinking. 'The others don't fit me.'

You belong to her.'

He looked at the red-glinting, soft stone, on her over-sen-He did not answer. She remained with the jewels shut in sitive skin.

her hand. She wanted to try them on her fingers, but some-

'Yes,' he said.

thing in her would not let her. And moreover, she was afraid

'But opals are unlucky, aren't they?' she said wistfully.

her hands were too large, she shrank from the mortification of

'No. I prefer unlucky things. Luck is vulgar. Who wants a failure to put them on any but her little finger. They trav-what LUCK would bring? I don't.'

elled in silence through the empty lanes.

'But why?' she laughed.

Driving in a motor-car excited her, she forgot his presence And, consumed with a desire to see how the other rings even.

would look on her hand, she put them on her little finger.

'Where are we?' she asked suddenly.

'They can be made a little bigger,' he said.

'Not far from Worksop.'

'Yes,' she replied, doubtfully. And she sighed. She knew

'And where are we going?'

that, in accepting the rings, she was accepting a pledge. Yet

'Anywhere.'

fate seemed more than herself. She looked again at the jewels.

It was the answer she liked.

They were very beautiful to her eyes-not as ornament, or She opened her hand to look at the rings. They gave her wealth, but as tiny fragments of loveliness.

SUCH pleasure, as they lay, the three circles, with their knot-

'I'm glad you bought them,' she said, putting her hand, ted jewels, entangled in her palm. She would have to try them half unwillingly, gently on his arm.

on. She did so secretly, unwilling to let him see, so that he He smiled, slightly. He wanted her to come to him. But should not know her finger was too large for them. But he was angry at the bottom of his soul, and indifferent. He saw nevertheless. He always saw, if she wanted him not to. It knew she had a passion for him, really. But it was not finally was another of his hateful, watchful characteristics.

interesting. There were depths of passion when one became Only the opal, with its thin wire loop, would go on her impersonal and indifferent, unemotional. Whereas Ursula was

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still at the emotional personal level-always so abominably Perhaps also her interest was destructive, her analysing was a personal. He had taken her as he had never been taken him-real tearing to pieces. There was an under-space in her where self. He had taken her at the roots of her darkness and shame-she did not care for people and their idiosyncracies, even to like a demon, laughing over the fountain of mystic corrup-destroy them. She seemed to touch for a moment this tion which was one of the sources of her being, laughing, undersilence in herself, she became still, and she turned for a shrugging, accepting, accepting finally. As for her, when would moment purely to Birkin.

she so much go beyond herself as to accept him at the quick

'Won't it be lovely to go home in the dark?' she said. 'We of death?

might have tea rather late-shall we?-and have high tea?

She now became quite happy. The motor-car ran on, the Wouldn't that be rather nice?'

afternoon was soft and dim. She talked with lively interest,

'I promised to be at Shortlands for dinner,' he said.

analysing people and their motives-Gudrun, Gerald. He an-

'But-it doesn't matter-you can go tomorrow-'

swered vaguely. He was not very much interested any more in

'Hermione is there,' he said, in rather an uneasy voice. 'She personalities and in people-people were all different, but they is going away in two days. I suppose I ought to say good-bye were all enclosed nowadays in a definite limitation, he said; to her. I shall never see her again.'

there were only about two great ideas, two great streams of Ursula drew away, closed in a violent silence. He knitted activity remaining, with various forms of reaction therefrom.

his brows, and his eyes began to sparkle again in anger.

The reactions were all varied in various people, but they fol-

'You don't mind, do you?' he asked irritably.

lowed a few great laws, and intrinsically there was no differ-

'No, I don't care. Why should I? Why should I mind?'

ence. They acted and reacted involuntarily according to a few Her tone was jeering and offensive.

great laws, and once the laws, the great principles, were known,

'That's what I ask myself,' he said; 'why SHOULD you people were no longer mystically interesting. They were all mind! But you seem to.' His brows were tense with violent essentially alike, the differences were only variations on a theme.

irritation.

None of them transcended the given terms.

'I ASSURE you I don't, I don't mind in the least. Go Ursula did not agreepeople were still an adventure to her-where you belong-it's what I want you to do.'

but-perhaps not as much as she tried to persuade herself. Per-

'Ah you fool!' he cried, 'with your "go where you belong."

haps there was something mechanical, now, in her interest.

It's finished between Hermione and me. She means much

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more to YOU, if it comes to that, than she does to me. For me, for I've nothing to do with it.'

you can only revolt in pure reaction from her-and to be her And in the stress of her violent emotion, she got down opposite is to be her counterpart.'

from the car and went to the hedgerow, picking unconsciously

'Ah, opposite!' cried Ursula. 'I know your dodges. I am not some flesh-pink spindleberries, some of which were burst, taken in by your word-twisting. You belong to Hermione and showing their orange seeds.

her dead show. Well, if you do, you do. I don't blame you.

'Ah, you are a fool,' he cried, bitterly, with some contempt.

But then you've nothing to do with me.

'Yes, I am. I AM a fool. And thank God for it. I'm too big In his inflamed, overwrought exasperation, he stopped the a fool to swallow your cleverness. God be praised. You go to car, and they sat there, in the middle of the country lane, to your women—go to them—they are your sort—you've al-have it out. It was a crisis of war between them, so they did ways had a string of them trailing after you—and you always not see the ridiculousness of their situation.

will. Go to your spiritual brides—but don't come to me as

'If you weren't a fool, if only you weren't a fool,' he cried in well, because I'm not having any, thank you. You're not satis-bitter despair, 'you'd see that one could be decent, even when fied, are you? Your spiritual brides can't give you what you one has been wrong. I WAS wrong to go on all those years want, they aren't common and fleshy enough for you, aren't with Hermione—it was a deathly process. But after all, one they? So you come to me, and keep them in the background!

can have a little human decency. But no, you would tear my You will marry me for daily use. But you'll keep yourself well soul out with your jealousy at the very mention of Hermione's provided with spiritual brides in the background. I know your name.'

dirty little game.' Suddenly a flame ran over her, and she

'I jealous! I—jealous! You ARE mistaken if you think that.

stamped her foot madly on the road, and he winced, afraid I'm not jealous in the least of Hermione, she is nothing to me, that she would strike him. 'And I, I'M not spiritual enough, not THAT!' And Ursula snapped her fingers. 'No, it's you I'M not as spiritual as that Hermione—!' Her brows knitted, who are a liar. It's you who must return, like a dog to his her eyes blazed like a tiger's. 'Then go to her, that's all I say, vomit. It is what Hermione STANDS FOR that I HATE. I GO to her, GO. Ha, she spiritual—SPIRITUAL, she! A dirty HATE it. It is lies, it is false, it is death. But you want it, you materialist as she is. SHE spiritual? What does she care for, can't help it, you can't help

yourself. You belong to that old, what is her spirituality? What IS it?' Her fury seemed to deathly way of living—then go back to it. But don't come to blaze out and burn his face. He shrank a little. 'I tell you it's **Contents**



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DIRT, DIRT, and nothing BUT dirt. And it's dirt you want, eyes.

you crave for it. Spiritual! Is THAT spiritual, her bullying,

'YOU!' she cried. 'You! You truth-lover! You purity-mon-her conceit, her sordid materialism? She's a fishwife, a fishwife, ger! It STINKS, your truth and your purity. It stinks of the she is such a materialist. And all so sordid. What does she offal you feed on, you scavenger dog, you eater of corpses. You work out to, in the end, with all her social passion, as you call are foul, FOUL and you must know it. Your purity, your it. Social passion—what social passion has she?—show it me!— candour, your goodness—yes, thank you, we've had some. What where is it? She wants petty, immediate POWER, she wants you are is a foul, deathly thing, obscene, that's what you are, the illusion that she is a great woman, that is all. In her soul obscene and perverse. You, and love! You may well say, you she's a devilish unbeliever, common as dirt. That's what she is don't want love. No, you want YOURSELF, and dirt, and at the bottom. And all the rest is pretence—but you love it.

death—that's what you want. You are so PERVERSE, so You love the sham spirituality, it's your food. And why? Be-death-eating. And then—'

cause of the dirt underneath. Do you think I don't know the

'There's a bicycle coming,' he said, writhing under her loud foulness of your sex life—and her's?—I do. And it's that foul-denunciation.

ness you want, you liar. Then have it, have it. You're such a She glanced down the road.

liar.'

'I don't care,' she cried.

She turned away, spasmodically tearing the twigs of Nevertheless she was silent. The cyclist, having heard the spindleberry from the hedge, and fastening them, with vi-voices raised in altercation, glanced curiously at the man, and brating fingers, in the bosom of her coat.

the woman, and at the standing motor-car as he passed.

He stood watching in silence. A wonderful tenderness

'—Afternoon,' he said, cheerfully.

burned in him, at the sight of her quivering, so sensitive fin-

'Good-afternoon,' replied Birkin coldly.

gers: and at the same time he was full of rage and callousness.

They were silent as the man passed into the distance.

'This is a degrading exhibition,' he said coolly.

A clearer look had come over Birkin's face. He knew she

'Yes, degrading indeed,' she said. 'But more to me than to was in the main right. He knew he was perverse, so spiritual you.'

on the one hand, and in some strange way, degraded, on the

'Since you choose to degrade yourself,' he said. Again the other. But was she herself any better? Was anybody any bet-flash came over her face, the yellow lights concentrated in her ter?

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'It may all be true, lies and stink and all,' he said. 'But

'You are quite right,' she said.

Hermione's spiritual intimacy is no rottener than your emo-Still she hesitated. Then an ugly, malevolent look came tional-jealous intimacy. One can preserve the decencies, even over her face, she pulled the rings from her fingers, and tossed to one's enemies: for one's own sake. Hermione is my enemy—them at him. One touched his face, the others hit his coat, to her last breath! That's why I must bow her off the field.'

and they scattered into the mud.

'You! You and your enemies and your bows! A pretty pic-

'And take your rings,' she said, 'and go and buy yourself a ture you make of yourself. But it takes nobody in but your-female elsewhere—there are plenty to be had, who will be self. I JEALOUS! I! What I say,' her voice sprang into flame, quite glad to share your spiritual mess,—or to have your physi-

'I say because it is TRUE, do you see, because you are YOU, a cal mess, and leave your spiritual mess to Hermione.'

foul and false liar, a whited sepulchre. That's why I say it.

With which she walked away, desultorily, up the road. He And YOU hear it.'

stood motionless, watching her sullen, rather ugly walk. She

'And be grateful,' he added, with a satirical grimace.

was sullenly picking and pulling at the twigs of the hedge as

'Yes,' she cried, 'and if you have a spark of decency in you, she passed. She grew smaller, she seemed to pass out of his be grateful.'

sight. A darkness came over his mind. Only a small, mechani-

'Not having a spark of decency, however—' he retorted.

cal speck of consciousness hovered near him.

'No,' she cried, 'you haven't a SPARK. And so you can go He felt tired and weak. Yet also he was relieved. He gave your way, and I'll go mine. It's no good, not the slightest. So up his old position. He went and sat on the bank. No doubt you can leave me now, I don't want to go any further with Ursula was right. It was true, really, what she said. He knew you—leave me—'

that his spirituality was concomitant of a process of depravity,

'You don't even know where you are,' he said.

a sort of pleasure in self-destruction. There really WAS a

'Oh, don't bother, I assure you I shall be all right. I've got certain stimulant in self-destruction, for him—especially ten shillings in my purse, and that will take me back from when it was translated spiritually. But then he knew it —he anywhere YOU have brought me to.' She hesitated. The rings knew it, and had done. And was not Ursula's way of emo-were still on her fingers,

two on her little finger, one on her tional intimacy, emotional and physical, was it not just as ring finger. Still she hesitated.

dangerous as Hermione's abstract spiritual intimacy? Fusion,

'Very good,' he said. 'The only hopeless thing is a fool.'

fusion, this horrible fusion of two beings, which every woman

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and most men insisted on, was it not nauseous and horrible slumbering and utterly relaxed.

anyhow, whether it was a fusion of the spirit or of the emo-She came up and stood before him, hanging her head.

tional body? Hermione saw herself as the perfect Idea, to

'See what a flower I found you,' she said, wistfully hold-which all men must come: And Ursula was the perfect Womb, ing a piece of purple-red bell-heather under his face. He saw the bath of birth, to which all men must come! And both the clump of coloured bells, and the tree-like, tiny branch: were horrible. Why could they not remain individuals, lim-also her hands, with their over-fine, over-sensitive skin.

ited by their own limits? Why this dreadful all-comprehen-

'Pretty!' he said, looking up at her with a smile, taking the siveness, this hateful tyranny? Why not leave the other being, flower. Everything had become simple again, quite simple, free, why try to absorb, or melt, or merge? One might aban-the complexity gone into nowhere. But he badly wanted to don oneself utterly to the MOMENTS, but not to any other cry: except that he was weary and bored by emotion.

being.

Then a hot passion of tenderness for her filled his heart.

He could not bear to see the rings lying in the pale mud He stood up and looked into her face. It was new and oh, so of the road. He picked them up, and wiped them uncon-delicate in its luminous wonder and fear. He put his arms sciously on his hands. They were the little tokens of the real-round her, and she hid her face on his shoulder.

ity of beauty, the reality of happiness in warm creation. But It was peace, just simple peace, as he stood folding her he had made his hands all dirty and gritty.

quietly there on the open lane. It was peace at last. The old, There was a darkness over his mind. The terrible knot of detestable world of tension had passed away at last, his soul consciousness that had persisted there like an obsession was was strong and at ease.

broken, gone, his life was dissolved in darkness over his limbs She looked up at him. The wonderful yellow light in her and his body. But there was a point of anxiety in his heart eyes now was soft and yielded, they were at peace with each now. He wanted her to come back. He breathed lightly and other. He kissed her, softly, many, many times. A laugh came regularly like an infant, that breathes innocently, beyond the into her eyes.

touch of responsibility.

'Did I abuse you?' she asked.

She was coming back. He saw her drifting desultorily un-He smiled too, and took her hand, that was so soft and der the high hedge, advancing towards him slowly. He did given.

not move, he did not look again. He was as if asleep, at peace,

'Never mind,' she said, 'it is all for the good.' He kissed her

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again, softly, many times.

ness.

'Isn't it?' she said.

She knew it was true. She broke away.

'Certainly,' he replied. 'Wait! I shall have my own back.'

'So you ought,' she said, turning round to look at the road.

She laughed suddenly, with a wild catch in her voice, and

'Did you find the rings?'

flung her arms around him.

'Yes.'

'You are mine, my love, aren't you?' she cried straining him

'Where are they?'

close.

'In my pocket.'

'Yes,' he said, softly.

She put her hand into his pocket and took them out.

His voice was so soft and final, she went very still, as if She was restless.

under a fate which had taken her. Yes, she acquiesced—but it

'Shall we go?' she said.

was accomplished without her acquiescence. He was kissing

'Yes,' he answered. And they mounted to the car once more, her quietly, repeatedly, with a soft, still happiness that almost and left behind them this memorable battle-field.

made her heart stop beating.

They drifted through the wild, late afternoon, in a beau-

'My love!' she cried, lifting her face and looking with fright-tiful motion that was smiling and transcendent. His mind ened, gentle wonder of bliss. Was it all real? But his eyes were was sweetly at ease, the life flowed through him as from some beautiful and soft and immune from stress or excitement, new fountain, he was as if born out of the cramp of a womb.

beautiful and smiling lightly to her, smiling with her. She hid

'Are you happy?' she asked him, in her strange, delighted her face on his

shoulder, hiding before him, because he could way.

see her so completely. She knew he loved her, and she was

'Yes,' he said.

afraid, she was in a strange element, a new heaven round about

'So am I,' she cried in sudden ecstacy, putting her arm her. She wished he were passionate, because in passion she round him and clutching him violently against her, as he steered was at home. But this was so still and frail, as space is more the motor-car.

frightening than force.

'Don't drive much more,' she said. 'I don't want you to be Again, quickly, she lifted her head.

always doing something.'

'Do you love me?' she said, quickly, impulsively.

'No,' he said. 'We'll finish this little trip, and then we'll

'Yes,' he replied, not heeding her motion, only her still-be free.'

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'We will, my love, we will,' she cried in delight, kissing centuries sounding. It was all so far off. She stood in the old him as he turned to her.

yard of the inn, smelling of straw and stables and petrol. Above, He drove on in a strange new wakefulness, the tension of she could see the first stars. What was it all? This was no his consciousness broken. He seemed to be conscious all over, actual world, it was the dream-world of one's childhood—a all his body awake with a simple, glimmering awareness, as if great circumscribed reminiscence. The world had become he had just come awake, like a thing that is born, like a bird unreal. She herself was a strange, transcendent reality.

when it comes out of an egg, into a new universe.

They sat together in a little parlour by the fire.

They dropped down a long hill in the dusk, and suddenly

'Is it true?' she said, wondering.

Ursula recognised on her right hand, below in the hollow, the

'What?'

form of Southwell Minster.

'Everything—is everything true?'

'Are we here!' she cried with pleasure.

'The best is true,' he said, grimacing at her.

The rigid, sombre, ugly cathedral was settling under the

'Is it?' she replied, laughing, but unassured.

gloom of the coming night, as they entered the narrow town, She looked at him. He seemed still so separate. New eyes the golden lights showed like slabs of revelation, in the shop-were opened in her soul. She saw a strange

creature from an-windows.

other world, in him. It was as if she were enchanted, and

'Father came here with mother,' she said, 'when they first everything were metamorphosed. She recalled again the old knew each other. He loves it—he loves the Minster. Do you?'

magic of the Book of Genesis, where the sons of God saw the

'Yes. It looks like quartz crystals sticking up out of the daughters of men, that they were fair. And he was one of dark hollow. We'll have our high tea at the Saracen's Head.'

these, one of these strange creatures from the beyond, looking As they descended, they heard the Minster bells playing a down at her, and seeing she was fair.

hymn, when the hour had struck six.

He stood on the hearth-rug looking at her, at her face that was upturned exactly like a flower, a fresh, luminous flower, Glory to thee my God this night

glinting faintly golden with the dew of the first light. And he For all the blessings of the light—

was smiling faintly as if there were no speech in the world, So, to Ursula's ear, the tune fell out, drop by drop, from save the silent delight of flowers in each other. Smilingly they the unseen sky on to the dusky town. It was like dim, bygone delighted in each other's presence, pure presence, not to be **Contents**



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thought of, even known. But his eyes had a faintly ironical rich bright brow like a diadem above his eyes. She was beau-contraction.

tiful as a new marvellous flower opened at his knees, a paradisal And she was drawn to him strangely, as in a spell. Kneel-flower she was, beyond womanhood, such a flower of lumi-ing on the hearth-rug before him, she put her arms round his nousness. Yet something was tight and unfree in him. He did loins, and put her face against his thigh. Riches! Riches! She not like this crouching, this radiance—not altogether.

was overwhelmed with a sense of a heavenful of riches.

It was all achieved, for her. She had found one of the sons

'We love each other,' she said in delight.

of God from the Beginning, and he had found one of the

'More than that,' he answered, looking down at her with first most luminous daughters of men.

his glimmering, easy face.

She traced with her hands the line of his loins and thighs, Unconsciously, with her sensitive fingertips, she was trac-at the back, and a living fire ran through her, from him, darkly.

ing the back of his thighs, following some mysterious life-It was a dark flood of electric passion she released from him, flow there. She had discovered something, something more drew into herself. She had established a rich new circuit, a than wonderful, more wonderful than life itself. It was the new current of passional electric energy, between the two of strange mystery of his life-motion, there, at the back of the them, released from the darkest poles

of the body and estab-thighs, down the flanks. It was a strange reality of his being, lished in perfect circuit. It was a dark fire of electricity that the very stuff of being, there in the straight downflow of the rushed from him to her, and flooded them both with rich thighs. It was here she discovered him one of the sons of God peace, satisfaction.

such as were in the beginning of the world, not a man, some-

'My love,' she cried, lifting her face to him, her eyes, her thing other, something more.

mouth open in transport.

This was release at last. She had had lovers, she had known

'My love,' he answered, bending and kissing her, always passion. But this was neither love nor passion. It was the daugh-kissing her.

ters of men coming back to the sons of God, the strange in-She closed her hands over the full, rounded body of his human sons of God who are in the beginning.

loins, as he stooped over her, she seemed to touch the quick of Her face was now one dazzle of released, golden light, as the mystery of darkness that was bodily him. She seemed to she looked up at him, and laid her hands full on his thighs, faint beneath, and he seemed to faint, stooping over her. It behind, as he stood before her. He looked down at her with a was a perfect passing away for both of them, and at the same **Contents**



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time the most intolerable accession into being, the marvel-cresses and red beet-root, and medlars and apple-tart, and lous fullness of immediate gratification, overwhelming, out-tea.

flooding from the source of the deepest life-force, the dark-

'What GOOD things!' she cried with pleasure. 'How noble est, deepest, strangest life-source of the human body, at the it looks!—shall I pour out the tea?—'

back and base of the loins.

She was usually nervous and uncertain at performing these After a lapse of stillness, after the rivers of strange dark public duties, such as giving tea. But today she forgot, she fluid richness had passed over her, flooding, carrying away was at her ease, entirely forgetting to have misgivings. The her mind and flooding down her spine and down her knees, tea-pot poured beautifully from a proud slender spout. Her past her feet, a strange flood, sweeping away everything and eyes were warm with smiles as she gave him his tea. She had leaving her an essential new being, she was left quite free, she learned at last to be still and perfect.

was free in complete ease, her complete self. So she rose, stilly

'Everything is ours,' she said to him.

and blithe, smiling at him. He stood before her, glimmering,

'Everything,' he answered.

so awfully real, that her heart almost stopped beating. He She gave a queer little crowing sound of triumph.

stood there in his strange, whole body, that had its marvellous

'I'm so glad!' she cried, with unspeakable relief.

fountains, like the bodies of the sons of God who were in the

'So am I,' he said. 'But I'm thinking we'd better get out of beginning. There were strange fountains of his body, more our responsibilities as quick as we can.'

mysterious and potent than any she had imagined or known,

'What responsibilities?' she asked, wondering.

more satisfying, ah, finally, mystically-physically satisfying.

'We must drop our jobs, like a shot.'

She had thought there was no source deeper than the phallic A new understanding dawned into her face.

source. And now, behold, from the smitten rock of the man's

'Of course,' she said, 'there's that.'

body, from the strange marvellous flanks and thighs, deeper,

'We must get out,' he said. 'There's nothing for it but to further in mystery than the phallic source, came the floods of get out, quick.'

ineffable darkness and ineffable riches.

She looked at him doubtfully across the table.

They were glad, and they could forget perfectly. They

'But where?' she said.

laughed, and went to the meal provided. There was a venison

'I don't know,' he said. 'We'll just wander about for a bit.'

pasty, of all things, a large broad-faced cut ham, eggs and Again she looked

at him quizzically.

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'I should be perfectly happy at the Mill,' she said.

'But where—?' she sighed.

'It's very near the old thing,' he said. 'Let us wander a bit.'

'Somewhere—anywhere. Let's wander off. That's the thing His voice could be so soft and happy-go-lucky, it went to do—let's wander off.'

through her veins like an exhilaration. Nevertheless she

'Yes—' she said, thrilled at the thought of travel. But to dreamed of a valley, and wild gardens, and peace. She had a her it was only travel.

desire too for splendour—an aristocratic extravagant splendour.

'To be free,' he said. 'To be free, in a free place, with a few Wandering seemed to her like restlessness, dissatisfaction.

other people!'

'Where will you wander to?' she asked.

'Yes,' she said wistfully. Those 'few other people' depressed

'I don't know. I feel as if I would just meet you and we'd her.

set off—just towards the distance.'

'It isn't really a locality, though,' he said. 'It's a perfected

'But where can one go?' she asked anxiously. 'After all, there relation between you and me, and others—the perfect rela-is only the world, and none of it is very distant.'

tion—so that we are free together.'

'Still,' he said, 'I should like to go with you—nowhere. It

'It is, my love, isn't it,' she said. 'It's you and me. It's you would be rather wandering just to nowhere. That's the place and me, isn't it?' She stretched out her arms to him. He went to get to—nowhere. One wants to wander away from the world's across and stooped to kiss her face. Her arms closed round somewheres, into our own nowhere.'

him again, her hands spread upon his shoulders, moving slowly Still she meditated.

there, moving slowly on his back, down his back slowly, with

'You see, my love,' she said, 'I'm so afraid that while we are a strange recurrent, rhythmic motion, yet moving slowly down, only people, we've got to take the world that's given—because pressing mysteriously over his loins, over his flanks. The sense there isn't any other.'

of the awfulness of riches that could never be impaired flooded

'Yes there is,' he said. 'There's somewhere where we can be her mind like a swoon, a death in most marvellous possession, free—somewhere where one needn't wear much clothes—none mystic-sure. She possessed him so utterly and intolerably, that even—where one meets a few people who have gone through she herself lapsed out. And yet she was only sitting still in the

enough, and can take things for granted—where you be your-chair, with her hands pressed upon him, and lost.

self, without bothering. There is somewhere—there are one Again he softly kissed her.

or two people—'

'We shall never go apart again,' he murmured quietly. And

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she did not speak, but only pressed her hands firmer down

'Yes,' he replied. 'Their imaginations shall not work on us.

upon the source of darkness in him.

I'll post yours here, mine after. I cannot be implicated in They decided, when they woke again from the pure swoon, their imaginings.'

to write their resignations from the world of work there and He looked at her with his strange, non-human singleness.

then. She wanted this.

'Yes, you are right,' she said.

He rang the bell, and ordered note-paper without a printed She lifted her face to him, all shining and open. It was as address. The waiter cleared the table.

if he might enter straight into the source of her radiance. His

'Now then,' he said, 'yours first. Put your home address, face became a little distracted.

and the date—then "Director of Education, Town Hall—

'Shall we go?' he said.

Sir—" Now then!—I don't know how one really stands—I

'As you like,' she replied.

suppose one could get out of it in less than month—Anyhow They were soon out of the little town, and running through

"Sir—I beg to resign my post as classmistress in the Willey the uneven lanes of the country. Ursula nestled near him, into Green Grammar School. I should be very grateful if you would his constant warmth, and watched the pale-lit revelation rac-liberate me as soon as possible, without waiting for the expi-ing ahead, the visible night. Sometimes it was a wide old road, ration of the month's notice." That'll do. Have you got it?

with grass-spaces on either side, flying magic and elfin in the Let me look. "Ursula Brangwen." Good! Now I'll write mine.

greenish illumination, sometimes it was trees looming overI ought to give them three months, but I can plead health. I head, sometimes it was bramble bushes, sometimes the walls can arrange it all right.'

of a crew-yard and the butt of a barn.

He sat and wrote out his formal resignation.

'Are you going to Shortlands to dinner?' Ursula asked him

'Now,' he said, when the envelopes were sealed and ad-suddenly. He started.

dressed, 'shall we post them here, both together? I know Jackie

'Good God!' he said. 'Shortlands! Never again. Not that.

will say, "Here's a coincidence!" when he receives them in all Besides we should be too late.'

their identity. Shall we let him say it, or not?'

'Where are we going then—to the Mill?'

'I don't care,' she said.

'If you like. Pity to go anywhere on this good dark night.

'No—?' he said, pondering.

Pity to come out of it, really. Pity we can't stop in the good

'It doesn't matter, does it?' she said.

darkness. It is better than anything ever would be—this good

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immediate darkness.'

She was glad and frightened. She cowered near to him.

She sat wondering. The car lurched and swayed. She knew

'But what about them at home?' she said.

there was no leaving him, the darkness held them both and

'Send a telegram.'

contained them, it was not to be surpassed Besides she had a Nothing more was said. They ran on in silence. But with a full mystic knowledge of his suave loins of darkness, dark-sort of second consciousness he steered the car towards a des-clad and suave, and in this knowledge there was some of the tination. For he had the free intelligence to direct his own inevitability and the beauty of fate, fate which one asks for, ends. His arms and his breast and his head were rounded and which one accepts in full.

living like those of the Greek, he had not the unawakened He sat still like an Egyptian Pharoah, driving the car. He straight arms of the Egyptian, nor the sealed, slumbering head.

felt as if he were seated in immemorial potency, like the great A lambent intelligence played secondarily above his pure carven statues of real Egypt, as real and as fulfilled with subtle Egyptian concentration in darkness.

strength, as these are, with a vague inscrutable smile on the They came to a village that lined along the road. The car lips. He knew what it was to have the strange and magical crept slowly along, until he saw the post-office. Then he pulled current of force in his back and loins, and down his legs, force up.

so perfect that it stayed him immobile, and left his face sub-

'I will send a telegram to your father,' he said. 'I will merely tly, mindlessly smiling. He knew what it was to be awake and say "spending the night in town," shall I?'

potent in that other basic mind, the deepest physical mind.

'Yes,' she answered. She did not want to be disturbed into And from this source he had a pure and magic control, magi-taking thought.

cal, mystical, a force in darkness, like electricity.

She watched him move into the post-office. It was also a It was very difficult to speak, it was so perfect to sit in this shop, she saw. Strange, he was. Even as he went into the lighted, pure living silence, subtle, full of unthinkable knowledge and public place he remained dark and magic, the living silence unthinkable force, upheld immemorially in timeless force, like seemed the body of reality in him, subtle, potent, indiscover-the immobile, supremely potent Egyptians, seated forever in able. There he was! In a strange uplift of elation she saw him, their living, subtle silence.

the being never to be revealed, awful in its potency, mystic

'We need not go home,' he said. 'This car has seats that let and real. This dark, subtle reality of him, never to be trans-down and make a bed, and we can lift the hood.'

lated, liberated her into perfection, her own perfected being.

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She too was dark and fulfilled in silence.

edge. Now she would know him, and he too would be liber-He came out, throwing some packages into the car.

ated. He would be night-free, like an Egyptian, steadfast in

'There is some bread, and cheese, and raisins, and apples, perfectly suspended equilibrium, pure mystic nodality of and hard chocolate,' he said, in his voice that was as if laugh-physical being. They would give each other this star-equilib-ing, because of the unblemished stillness and force which was rium which alone is freedom.

the reality in him. She would have to touch him. To speak, to She saw that they were running among trees—great old see, was nothing. It was a travesty to look and to comprehend trees with dying bracken undergrowth. The palish, gnarled the man there. Darkness and silence must fall perfectly on trunks showed ghostly, and like old priests in the hovering her, then she could know mystically, in unrevealed touch. She distance, the fern rose magical and mysterious. It was a night must lightly, mindlessly connect with him, have the knowl-all darkness, with low cloud. The motor-car advanced slowly.

edge which is death of knowledge, the reality of surety in

'Where are we?' she whispered.

not-knowing.

'In Sherwood Forest.'

Soon they had run on again into the darkness. She did not It was evident he knew the place. He drove softly, watch-ask where they were going, she did not care. She sat in a full-ing. Then they came to a green road between the trees. They ness and a pure potency that was like apathy, mindless and turned cautiously round, and were advancing between the oaks immobile. She was next to him, and hung in a pure rest, as a of the forest, down a green lane. The green lane widened into star is hung, balanced unthinkably. Still there remained a dark a little circle of grass, where there was a small trickle of

water lambency of anticipation. She would touch him. With perat the bottom of a sloping bank. The car stopped.

fect fine fingertips of reality she would touch the reality in

'We will stay here,' he said, 'and put out the lights.'

him, the suave, pure, untranslatable reality of his loins of dark-He extinguished the lamps at once, and it was pure night, ness. To touch, mindlessly in darkness to come in pure touch-with shadows of trees like realities of other, nightly being. He ing upon the living reality of him, his suave perfect loins and threw a rug on to the bracken, and they sat in stillness and thighs of darkness, this was her sustaining anticipation.

mindless silence. There were faint sounds from the wood, but And he too waited in the magical steadfastness of sus-no disturbance, no possible disturbance, the world was under pense, for her to take this knowledge of him as he had taken it a strange ban, a new mystery had supervened. They threw off of her. He knew her darkly, with the fullness of dark knowl-their clothes, and he gathered her to him, and found her, found **Contents**



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the pure lambent reality of her forever invisible flesh.

Quenched, inhuman, his fingers upon her unrevealed nudity were the fingers of silence upon silence, the body of mysterious night upon the body of mysterious night, the night mas-culine and feminine, never to be seen with the eye, or known with the mind, only known as a palpable revelation of living otherness.

She had her desire of him, she touched, she received the maximum of unspeakable communication in touch, dark, subtle, positively silent, a magnificent gift and give again, a perfect acceptance and yielding, a mystery, the reality of that Chapter 24.

which can never be known, vital, sensual reality that can never *Death and love*.

be transmuted into mind content, but remains outside, living body of darkness and silence and subtlety, the mystic body of Thomas Crich died slowly,

terribly slowly. It seemed im-reality. She had her desire fulfilled. He had his desire ful-possible to everybody that the thread of life could be drawn filled. For she was to him what he was to her, the immemorial out so thin, and yet not break. The sick man lay unutterably magnificence of mystic, palpable, real otherness.

weak and spent, kept alive by morphia and by drinks, which They slept the chilly night through under the hood of the he sipped slowly. He was only half conscious—a thin strand car, a night of unbroken sleep. It was already high day when of consciousness linking the darkness of death with the light he awoke. They looked at each other and laughed, then looked of day. Yet his will was unbroken, he was integral, complete.

away, filled with darkness and secrecy. Then they kissed and Only he must have perfect stillness about him.

remembered the magnificence of the night. It was so mag-Any presence but that of the nurses was a strain and an nificent, such an inheritance of a universe of dark reality, that effort to him now. Every morning Gerald went into the room, they were afraid to seem to remember. They hid away the hoping to find his father passed away at last. Yet always he remembrance and the knowledge.

saw the same transparent face, the same dread dark hair on the waxen forehead, and the awful, inchoate dark eyes, which

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seemed to be decomposing into formless darkness, having only snapped it,— if it did not persist after a physical death. In the a tiny grain of vision within them.

same way, the will of the son never yielded. He stood firm And always, as the dark, inchoate eyes turned to him, there and immune, he was outside this death and this dying.

passed through Gerald's bowels a burning stroke of revolt, It was a trial by ordeal. Could he stand and see his father that seemed to resound through his whole being, threatening slowly dissolve and disappear in death, without once yielding to break his mind with its clangour, and making him mad.

his will, without once relenting before the omnipotence of Every morning, the son stood there, erect and taut with death. Like a Red Indian undergoing torture, Gerald would life, gleaming in his blondness. The gleaming blondness of experience the whole process of slow death without wincing his strange, imminent being put the father into a fever of or flinching. He even triumphed in it. He somehow fretful irritation. He could not bear to meet the uncanny, WANTED this death, even forced it. It was as if he himself downward look of Gerald's blue eyes. But it was only for a were dealing the death, even when he most recoiled in horror.

moment. Each on the brink of departure, the father and son Still, he would deal it, he would triumph through death.

looked at each other, then parted.

But in the stress of this ordeal, Gerald too lost his hold on For a long time Gerald preserved a perfect sang froid, he the outer, daily life. That which was much to him, came to remained quite collected. But at last, fear undermined him.

mean nothing. Work, pleasure—it was all left behind. He He was afraid of some horrible collapse in himself. He had to went on more or less mechanically with his business, but this stay and see this thing through. Some

perverse will made him activity was all extraneous. The real activity was this ghastly watch his father drawn over the borders of life. And yet, now, wrestling for death in his own soul. And his own will should every day, the great red-hot stroke of horrified fear through triumph. Come what might, he would not bow down or sub-the bowels of the son struck a further inflammation. Gerald mit or acknowledge a master. He had no master in death.

went about all day with a tendency to cringe, as if there were But as the fight went on, and all that he had been and was the point of a sword of Damocles pricking the nape of his continued to be destroyed, so that life was a hollow shell all neck.

round him, roaring and clattering like the sound of the sea, a There was no escape—he was bound up with his father, noise in which he participated externally, and inside this hol-he had to see him through. And the father's will never relaxed low shell was all the darkness and fearful space of death, he or yielded to death. It would have to snap when death at last knew he would have to find reinforcements, otherwise he **Contents**



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would collapse inwards upon the great dark void which circled

'Oh, they won't mind, will they?' he said. 'I should be aw-at the centre of his soul. His will held his outer life, his outer fully glad if you'd stay.'

mind, his outer being unbroken and unchanged. But the pres-Her long silence

gave consent at last.

sure was too great. He would have to find something to make

'I'll tell Thomas, shall I?' he said.

good the equilibrium. Something must come with him into

'I must go almost immediately after dinner,' she said.

the hollow void of death in his soul, fill it up, and so equalise It was a dark, cold evening. There was no fire in the draw-the pressure within to the pressure without. For day by day ingroom, they sat in the library. He was mostly silent, ab-he felt more and more like a bubble filled with darkness, round sent, and Winifred talked little. But when Gerald did rouse which whirled the iridescence of his consciousness, and upon himself, he smiled and was pleasant and ordinary with her.

which the pressure of the outer world, the outer life, roared Then there came over him again the long blanks, of which he vastly.

was not aware.

In this extremity his instinct led him to Gudrun. He threw She was very much attracted by him. He looked so preoc-away everything now—he only wanted the relation established cupied, and his strange, blank silences, which she could not with her. He would follow her to the studio, to be near her, to read, moved her and made her wonder over him, made her talk to her. He would stand about the room, aimlessly picking feel reverential towards him.

up the implements, the lumps of clay, the little figures she But he was very kind. He gave her the best things at the had cast—they were whimsical and grotesque—looking at them table, he had a bottle of slightly sweet, delicious golden wine without perceiving them. And she felt him following her, brought out for dinner, knowing she would prefer it to the dogging her heels like a doom. She held away from him, and burgundy. She felt herself esteemed, needed almost.

yet she knew he drew always a little nearer, a little nearer.

As they took coffee in the library, there was a soft, very

'I say,' he said to her one evening, in an odd, unthinking, soft knocking at the door. He started, and called 'Come in.'

uncertain way, 'won't you stay to dinner tonight? I wish you The timbre of his voice, like something vibrating at high pitch, would.'

unnerved Gudrun. A nurse in white entered, half hovering in She started slightly. He spoke to her like a man making a the doorway like a shadow. She was very goodlooking, but request of another man.

strangely enough, shy and self-mistrusting.

'They'll be expecting me at home,' she said.

'The doctor would like to speak to you, Mr Crich,' she

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said, in her low, discreet voice.

feeling, as he stood there so rapt, saying nothing? He kept

'The doctor!' he said, starting up. 'Where is he?'

her—she could feel that. He would not let her go. She watched

'He is in the diningroom.'

him in humble submissiveness.

'Tell him I'm coming.'

'Had the doctor anything new to tell you?' she asked, softly, He drank up his coffee, and followed the nurse, who had at length, with that gentle, timid sympathy which touched a dissolved like a shadow.

keen fibre in his heart. He lifted his eyebrows with a negli-

'Which nurse was that?' asked Gudrun.

gent, indifferent expression.

'Miss Inglis—I like her best,' replied Winifred.

'No—nothing new,' he replied, as if the question were quite After a while Gerald came back, looking absorbed by his casual, trivial. 'He says the pulse is very weak indeed, very own thoughts, and having some of that tension and abstrac-intermittent—but that doesn't necessarily mean much, you tion which is seen in a slightly drunken man. He did not say know.'

what the doctor had wanted him for, but stood before the He looked down at her. Her eyes were dark and soft and fire, with his hands behind his back, and his face open and as unfolded, with a stricken look that roused him.

if rapt. Not that he was really thinking—he was only arrested

'No,' she murmured at length. 'I don't understand anyin pure suspense inside himself, and thoughts wafted through thing about these things.'

his mind without order.

'Just as well not,' he said. 'I say, won't you have a ciga-

'I must go now and see Mama,' said Winifred, 'and see rette?—do!' He quickly fetched the box, and held her a light.

Dadda before he goes to sleep.'

Then he stood before her on the hearth again.

She bade them both good-night.

'No,' he said, 'we've never had much illness in the house, Gudrun also rose to take her leave.

either—not till father.' He seemed to meditate a while. Then

'You needn't go yet, need you?' said Gerald, glancing quickly looking down at her, with strangely communicative blue eyes, at the clock.' It is early yet. I'll walk down with you when you that filled her with dread, he continued: 'It's something you go. Sit down, don't hurry away.'

don't reckon with, you know, till it is there. And then you Gudrun sat down, as if, absent as he was, his will had power realise that it was there all the time —it was always there—

over her. She felt almost mesmerised. He was strange to her, you understand what I mean?—the possibility of this incur-something unknown. What was he thinking, what was he able illness, this slow death.'

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He moved his feet uneasily on the marble hearth, and put your hands. Well, it's a situation that obviously can't con-his cigarette to his mouth, looking up at the ceiling.

tinue. You can't stand holding the roof up with your hands,

'I know,' murmured Gudrun: 'it is dreadful.'

for ever. You know that sooner or later you'll HAVE to let go.

He smoked without knowing. Then he took the cigarette Do you understand what I mean? And so something's got to from his lips, bared his teeth, and putting the tip of his tongue be done, or there's a universal collapse—as far as you yourself between his teeth spat off a grain of tobacco, turning slightly are concerned.'

aside, like a man who is alone, or who is lost in thought.

He shifted slightly on the hearth, crunching a cinder un-

'I don't know what the effect actually IS, on one,' he said, der his heel. He looked down at it. Gudrun was aware of the and again he looked down at her. Her eyes were dark and beautiful old marble panels of the fireplace, swelling softly stricken with knowledge, looking into his. He saw her sub-carved, round him and above him. She felt as if she were merged, and he turned aside his face. 'But I absolutely am caught at last by fate, imprisoned in some horrible and fatal not the same. There's nothing left, if you understand what I trap.

mean. You seem to be clutching at the void—and at the same

'But what CAN be done?' she murmured humbly. 'You time you are void yourself. And so you don't know what to must use me if I can be of any help at all—but how can I? I DO.'

don't see how I CAN help you.'

'No,' she murmured. A heavy thrill ran down her nerves, He looked down at her critically.

heavy, almost pleasure, almost pain. 'What can be done?' she

'I don't want you to HELP,' he said, slightly irritated, 'be-added.

cause there's nothing to be DONE. I only want sympathy, do He turned, and flipped the ash from his cigarette on to you see: I want somebody I can talk to sympathetically. That the great marble hearth-stones, that lay bare in the room, eases the strain. And there IS nobody to talk to sympatheti-without fender or bar.

cally. That's the curious thing. There IS nobody. There's

'I don't know, I'm sure,' he replied. 'But I do think you've Rupert Birkin. But then he ISN'T sympathetic, he wants to got to find some way of resolving the situation—not because DICTATE. And that is no use whatsoever.'

you want to, but because you've GOT to, otherwise you're She was caught in a strange snare. She looked down at her done. The whole of everything, and yourself included, is just hands.

on the point of caving in, and you are just holding it up with Then there was the sound of the door softly opening.

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Gerald started. He was chagrined. It was his starting that Her bulk seemed hunched in the chair, her fair hair hung really startled Gudrun. Then he went forward, with quick, slack over her ears. But her skin was clear and fine, her hands, graceful, intentional courtesy.

as she sat with them forgotten and folded, were quite beauti-

'Oh, mother!' he said. 'How nice of you to come down.

ful, full of potential energy. A great mass of energy seemed How are you?'

decaying up in that silent, hulking form.

The elderly woman, loosely and bulkily wrapped in a purple She looked up at her son, as he stood, keen and soldierly, gown, came forward silently, slightly hulked, as usual. Her near to her. Her eyes were most wonderfully blue, bluer than son was at her side. He pushed her up a chair, saying 'You forget-menots. She seemed to have a certain confidence in know Miss Brangwen, don't you?'

Gerald, and to feel a certain motherly mistrust of him.

The mother glanced at Gudrun indifferently.

'How are YOU?' she muttered, in her strangely quiet voice,

'Yes,' she said. Then she turned her wonderful, forget-me-as if nobody should hear but him. 'You're not getting into a not blue eyes up to her son, as she slowly sat down in the state, are you?

chair he had brought her.

You're not letting it make you hysterical?'

'I came to ask you about your father,' she said, in her rapid, The curious challenge in the last words startled Gudrun.

scarcely-audible voice. 'I didn't know you had company.'

'I don't think so, mother,' he answered, rather coldly cheery.

'No? Didn't Winifred tell you? Miss Brangwen stayed to

'Somebody's got to see it through, you know.'

dinner, to make us a little more lively—'

'Have they? Have they?' answered his mother rapidly.

Mrs Crich turned slowly round to Gudrun, and looked at

'Why should YOU take it on yourself? What have you got to her, but with unseeing eyes.

do, seeing it through. It will see itself through. You are not

'I'm afraid it would be no treat to her.' Then she turned needed.'

again to her son. 'Winifred tells me the doctor had some-

'No, I don't suppose I can do any good,' he answered. 'It's thing to say about your father. What is it?'

just how it affects us, you see.'

'Only that the pulse is very weak—misses altogether a good

'You like to be affected—don't you? It's quite nuts for many times—so that he might not last the night out,' Gerald you? You would have to be important. You have no need to replied.

stop at home. Why don't you go away!'

Mrs Crich sat perfectly impassive, as if she had not heard.

These sentences, evidently the ripened grain of many dark

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hours, took Gerald by surprise.

culty.

'I don't think it's any good going away now, mother, at the

'Will you go, mother?' he asked, politely.

last minute,' he said, coldly.

'Yes, I'll go up again,' she replied. Turning to Gudrun, she

'You take care,' replied his mother. 'You mind YOUR-bade her 'Goodnight.' Then she went slowly to the door, as SELF—that's your business. You take too much on yourself.

if she were unaccustomed to walking. At the door she lifted You mind YOURSELF, or you'll find yourself in Queer Street, her face to him, implicitly. He kissed her.

that's what will happen to you. You're hysterical, always were.'

'Don't come any further with me,' she said, in her barely

'I'm all right, mother,' he said. 'There's no need to worry audible voice. 'I

don't want you any further.'

about ME, I assure you.'

He bade her good-night, watched her across to the stairs

'Let the dead bury their dead—don't go and bury your-and mount slowly. Then he closed the door and came back to self along with them—that's what I tell you. I know you well Gudrun. Gudrun rose also, to go.

enough.'

'A queer being, my mother,' he said.

He did not answer this, not knowing what to say. The

'Yes,' replied Gudrun.

mother sat bunched up in silence, her beautiful white hands,

'She has her own thoughts.'

that had no rings whatsoever, clasping the pommels of her

'Yes,' said Gudrun.

arm-chair.

Then they were silent.

'You can't do it,' she said, almost bitterly. 'You haven't the

'You want to go?' he asked. 'Half a minute, I'll just have a nerve. You're as weak as a cat, really—always were. Is this young horse put in—'

woman staying here?'

'No,' said Gudrun. 'I want to walk.'

'No,' said Gerald. 'She is going home tonight.'

He had promised to walk with her down the long, lonely

'Then she'd better have the dog-cart. Does she go far?'

mile of drive, and she wanted this.

'Only to Beldover.'

'You might JUST as well drive,' he said.

'Ah!' The elderly woman never looked at Gudrun, yet she

'I'd MUCH RATHER walk,' she asserted, with empha-seemed to take knowledge of her presence.

sis.

'You are inclined to take too much on yourself, Gerald,'

'You would! Then I will come along with you. You know said the mother, pulling herself to her feet, with a little diffi-where your things are? I'll put boots on.'

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He put on a cap, and an overcoat over his evening dress.

drug to her. Did she then mean so much to him! She sipped They went out into the night.

the poison.

'Let us light a cigarette,' he said, stopping in a sheltered

'Are you happier?' she asked, wistfully.

angle of the porch. 'You have one too.'

'Much better,' he said, in the same exultant voice, 'and I So, with the scent of tobacco on the night air, they set off was rather far gone.'

down the dark drive that ran between close-cut hedges through She nestled against him. He felt her all soft and warm, she sloping meadows.

was the rich, lovely substance of his being. The warmth and He wanted to put his arm round her. If he could put his motion of her walk suffused through him wonderfully.

arm round her, and draw her against him as they walked, he

'I'm SO glad if I help you,' she said.

would equilibriate himself. For now he felt like a pair of scales,

'Yes,' he answered. 'There's nobody else could do it, if you the half of which tips down and down into an indefinite void.

wouldn't.'

He must recover some sort of balance. And here was the hope

'That is true,' she said to herself, with a thrill of strange, and the perfect recovery.

fatal elation.

Blind to her, thinking only of himself, he slipped his arm As they walked, he seemed to lift her nearer and nearer to softly round her waist, and drew her to him. Her heart fainted, himself, till she moved upon the firm vehicle of his body.

feeling herself taken. But then, his arm was so strong, she He was so strong, so sustaining, and he could not be op-quailed under its powerful close grasp. She died a little death, posed. She drifted along in a wonderful interfusion of physi-and was drawn against him as they walked down the stormy cal motion, down the dark, blowy hillside. Far across shone darkness. He seemed to balance her perfectly in opposition to the little yellow lights of Beldover, many of them, spread in a himself, in their dual motion of walking. So, suddenly, he was thick patch on another dark hill. But he and she were walking liberated and perfect, strong, heroic.

in perfect, isolated darkness, outside the world.

He put his hand to his mouth and threw his cigarette

'But how much do you care for me!' came her voice, al-away, a gleaming point, into the unseen hedge. Then he was most querulous. 'You see, I don't know, I don't understand!'

quite free to balance her.

'How much!' His voice rang with a painful elation. 'I don't

'That's better,' he said, with exultancy.

know either—but everything.' He was startled by his own The exultation in his voice was like a sweetish, poisonous declaration. It was true. So he stripped himself of every safe-

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guard, in making this admission to her. He cared everything on the other side. She had stood under it to hear the train for her—she was everything.

rumble thundering over the logs overhead. And she knew that

'But I can't believe it,' said her low voice, amazed, trem-under this dark and lonely bridge the young colliers stood in bling. She was trembling with doubt and exultance. This was the darkness with their sweethearts, in rainy weather. And so the thing she wanted to hear, only this. Yet now she heard it, she wanted to stand under the bridge with HER sweetheart, heard the strange clapping vibration of truth in his voice as he and be kissed under the bridge in the invisible darkness. Her said it, she could not believe. She could not believe—she did steps dragged as she drew near.

not believe. Yet she believed, triumphantly, with fatal exul-So, under the bridge, they came to a standstill, and he tance.

lifted her upon his breast. His body vibrated taut and power-

'Why not?' he said. 'Why don't you believe it? It's true. It ful as he closed upon her and crushed her, breathless and is true, as we stand at this moment —' he stood still with her dazed and destroyed, crushed her upon his breast. Ah, it was in the wind; 'I care for nothing on earth, or in heaven, outside terrible, and perfect. Under this bridge, the colliers pressed this spot where we are. And it isn't my own presence I care their lovers to their breast. And now, under the bridge, the about, it is all yours. I'd sell my soul a hundred times—but I master of them all pressed her to himself? And how much couldn't bear not to have you here. I couldn't bear to be alone.

more powerful and terrible was his embrace than theirs, how My brain would burst. It is true.' He drew her closer to him, much more concentrated and supreme his love was, than theirs with definite movement.

in the same sort! She felt she would swoon, die, under the

'No,' she murmured, afraid. Yet this was what she wanted.

vibrating, inhuman tension of his arms and his body—she Why did she so lose courage?

would pass away. Then the unthinkable high vibration slack-They resumed their strange walk. They were such strangened and became more undulating. He slackened and drew ers—and yet they were so frightfully, unthinkably near. It her with him to stand with his back to the wall.

was like a madness. Yet it was what she wanted, it was what She was almost unconscious. So the colliers' lovers would she wanted. They had descended the hill, and now they were stand with their backs to the walls, holding their sweethearts coming to the square arch where the road passed under the and kissing them as she was being kissed. Ah, but would their colliery railway. The arch, Gudrun knew, had walls of squared kisses be fine and powerful as the kisses of the firm-mouthed stone, mossy on one side with water that trickled down, dry master? Even the keen, short-cut moustache—the colliers **Contents**



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would not have that.

lightning sleeps in a pure, soft stone. So she was passed away And the colliers' sweethearts would, like herself, hang their and gone in him, and he was perfected.

heads back limp over their shoulder, and look out from the When she opened her eyes again, and saw the patch of dark archway, at the close patch of yellow lights on the unlights in the distance, it seemed to her strange that the world seen hill in the distance, or at the vague form of trees, and at still existed, that she was standing under the bridge resting the buildings of the colliery wood-yard, in the other direc-her head on Gerald's breast. Gerald—who was he? He was tion.

the exquisite adventure, the desirable unknown to her.

His arms were fast around her, he seemed to be gathering She looked up, and in the darkness saw his face above her, her into himself, her warmth, her softness, her adorable weight, his shapely, male face. There seemed a faint, white light emit-drinking in the suffusion of her physical being, avidly. He ted from him, a white aura, as if he were visitor from the lifted her, and seemed to pour her into himself, like wine into unseen. She reached up, like Eve reaching to the apples on a cup.

the tree of knowledge, and she kissed him, though her passion

'This is worth everything,' he said, in a strange, penetrat-was a transcendent fear of the thing he was, touching his face ing voice.

with her infinitely delicate, encroaching wondering fingers.

So she relaxed, and seemed to melt, to flow into him, as if Her fingers went over the mould of his face, over his features.

she were some infinitely warm and precious suffusion filling How perfect and foreign he was—ah how dangerous! Her into his veins, like an intoxicant. Her arms were round his soul thrilled with complete knowledge. This was the glisten-neck, he kissed her and held her perfectly suspended, she was ing, forbidden apple, this face of a man. She kissed him, put-all slack and flowing into him, and he was the firm, strong ting her fingers over his face, his eyes, his nostrils, over his cup that receives the wine of her life. So she lay cast upon brows and his ears, to his neck, to know him, to gather him in him, stranded, lifted up against him, melting and melting by touch. He was so firm, and shapely, with such satisfying, under his kisses, melting into his limbs and bones, as if he inconceivable shapeliness, strange, yet unutterably clear. He were soft iron becoming surcharged with her electric life.

was such an unutterable enemy, yet glistening with uncanny Till she seemed to swoon, gradually her mind went, and white fire. She wanted to touch him and touch him and touch she passed away, everything in her was melted down and fluid, him, till she had him all in her hands, till she had strained and she lay still, become contained by him, sleeping in him as him into her knowledge. Ah, if she could have the precious **Contents**



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KNOWLEDGE of him, she would be filled, and nothing They walked on towards the town, towards where the could deprive her of this. For he was so unsure, so risky in the lamps threaded singly, at long intervals down the dark high-common world of day.

road of the valley. They came at length to the gate of the

'You are so BEAUTIFUL,' she murmured in her throat.

drive.

He wondered, and was suspended. But she felt him quiver,

'Don't come any further,' she said.

and she came down involuntarily nearer upon him. He could

'You'd rather I didn't?' he asked, relieved. He did not want not help himself. Her fingers had him under their power.

to go up the public streets with her, his soul all naked and The fathomless, fathomless desire they could evoke in him alight as it was.

was deeper than death, where he had no choice.

'Much rather—good-night.' She held out her hand. He But she knew now, and it was enough. For the time, her grasped it, then touched the perilous, potent fingers with his soul was destroyed with the exquisite shock of his invisible lips.

fluid lightning. She knew. And this knowledge was a death

'Good-night,' he said. 'Tomorrow.'

from which she must recover. How much more of him was And they parted. He went home full of the strength and there to know? Ah much, much, many days harvesting for the power of living desire.

her large, yet perfectly subtle and intelligent hands upon the But the next day, she did not come, she sent a note that field of his living, radio-active body. Ah, her hands were ea-she was kept indoors by a cold. Here was a torment! But he ger, greedy for knowledge. But for the present it was enough, possessed his soul in some sort of patience, writing a brief enough, as much as her soul could bear. Too much, and she answer, telling her how sorry he was not to see her.

would shatter herself, she would fill the fine vial of her soul The day after this, he stayed at home—it seemed so futile too quickly, and it would break. Enough now—enough for to go down to the office. His father could not live the week the time being. There were all the after days when her hands, out.

And he wanted to be at home, suspended.

like birds, could feed upon the fields of him mystical plastic Gerald sat on a chair by the window in his father's room.

form—till then enough.

The landscape outside was black and winter-sodden. His fa-And even he was glad to be checked, rebuked, held back.

ther lay grey and ashen on the bed, a nurse moved silently in For to desire is better than to possess, the finality of the end her white dress, neat and elegant, even beautiful. There was a was dreaded as deeply as it was desired.

scent of eau-de-cologne in the room. The nurse went out of

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the room, Gerald was alone with death, facing the winter-

'Ah!' came her soft whimpering cry, and she hurried for-black landscape.

ward to the dead man. 'Ah-h!' came the slight sound of her

'Is there much more water in Denley?' came the faint voice, agitated distress, as she stood bending over the bedside. Then determined and querulous, from the bed. The dying man was she recovered, turned, and came for towel and

sponge. She asking about a leakage from Willey Water into one of the was wiping the dead face carefully, and murmuring, almost pits.

whimpering, very softly: 'Poor Mr Crich!—Poor Mr Crich!

'Some more—we shall have to run off the lake,' said Gerald.

Poor Mr Crich!'

'Will you?' The faint voice filtered to extinction. There

'Is he dead?' clanged Gerald's sharp voice.

was dead stillness. The grey-faced, sick man lay with eyes

'Oh yes, he's gone,' replied the soft, moaning voice of the closed, more dead than death. Gerald looked away. He felt his nurse, as she looked up at Gerald's face. She was young and heart was seared, it would perish if this went on much longer.

beautiful and quivering. A strange sort of grin went over Suddenly he heard a strange noise. Turning round, he saw Gerald's face, over the horror. And he walked out of the room.

his father's eyes wide open, strained and rolling in a frenzy of He was going to tell his mother. On the landing he met inhuman struggling. Gerald started to his feet, and stood his brother Basil.

transfixed in horror.

'He's gone, Basil,' he said, scarcely able to subdue his voice,

'Wha-a-ah-h-h-' came a horrible choking rattle from his not to let an unconscious, frightening exultation sound father's throat, the fearful, frenzied eye, rolling awfully in its through.

wild fruitless search for help, passed blindly over Gerald, then

'What?' cried Basil, going pale.

up came the dark blood and mess pumping over the face of Gerald nodded. Then he went on to his mother's room.

the agonised being. The tense body relaxed, the head fell aside, She was sitting in her purple gown, sewing, very slowly down the pillow.

sewing, putting in a stitch then another stitch. She looked up Gerald stood transfixed, his soul echoing in horror. He at Gerald with her blue undaunted eyes.

would move, but he could not. He could not move his limbs.

'Father's gone,' he said.

His brain seemed to re-echo, like a pulse.

'He's dead? Who says so?'

The nurse in white softly entered. She glanced at Gerald,

'Oh, you know, mother, if you see him.'

then at the bed.

She put her sewing down, and slowly rose.

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'Are you going to see him?' he asked.

know.' She was silent in intense silence.

'Yes,' she said

Then there came, in a low, tense voice: 'If I thought that By the bedside the children already stood in a weeping the children I bore would lie looking like that in death, I'd group.

strangle them when they were infants, yes—'

'Oh, mother!' cried the daughters, almost in hysterics, weep-

'No, mother,' came the strange, clarion voice of Gerald from ing loudly.

the background, 'we are different, we don't blame you.'

But the mother went forward. The dead man lay in re-She turned and looked full in his eyes. Then she lifted her pose, as if gently asleep, so gently, so peacefully, like a young hands in a strange half-gesture of mad despair.

man sleeping in purity. He was still warm. She stood looking

'Pray!' she said strongly. 'Pray for yourselves to God, for at him in gloomy, heavy silence, for some time.

there's no help for you from your parents.'

'Ay,' she said bitterly, at length, speaking as if to the un-

'Oh mother!' cried her daughters wildly.

seen witnesses of the air. 'You're dead.' She stood for some But she had turned and gone, and they all went quickly minutes in silence, looking down. 'Beautiful,' she asserted, away from each other.

'beautiful as if life had never touched you—never touched When Gudrun heard that Mr Crich was dead, she felt you. God send I look different. I hope

I shall look my years, rebuked. She had stayed away lest Gerald should think her when I am dead. Beautiful, beautiful,' she crooned over him.

too easy of winning. And now, he was in the midst of trouble,

'You can see him in his teens, with his first beard on his face.

whilst she was cold.

A beautiful soul, beautiful—' Then there was a tearing in her The following day she went up as usual to Winifred, who voice as she cried: 'None of you look like this, when you are was glad to see her, glad to get away into the studio. The girl dead! Don't let it happen again.' It was a strange, wild comhad wept, and then, too frightened, had turned aside to avoid mand from out of the unknown. Her children moved uncon-any more tragic eventuality. She and Gudrun resumed work sciously together, in a nearer group, at the dreadful command as usual, in the isolation of the studio, and this seemed an in her voice. The colour was flushed bright in her cheek, she immeasurable happiness, a pure world of freedom, after the looked awful and wonderful. 'Blame me, blame me if you aimlessness and misery of the house. Gudrun stayed on till like, that he lies there like a lad in his teens, with his first evening. She and Winifred had dinner brought up to the beard on his face. Blame me if you like. But you none of you studio, where they ate in freedom, away from all the people in Contents



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the house.

scarlet discs, and the curious coffee-machine, whose spirit-After dinner Gerald came up. The great high studio was flame flowed steadily, almost invisibly. There was the effect full of shadow and a fragrance of coffee. Gudrun and Winifred of rather sinister richness, in which Gerald at once escaped had a little table near the fire at the far end, with a white himself.

lamp whose light did not travel far. They were a tiny world to They all sat down, and Gudrun carefully poured out the themselves, the two girls surrounded by lovely shadows, the coffee.

beams and rafters shadowy overhead, the benches and imple-

'Will you have milk?' she asked calmly, yet nervously poising ments shadowy down the studio.

the little black jug with its big red dots. She was always so

'You are cosy enough here,' said Gerald, going up to them.

completely controlled, yet so bitterly nervous.

There was a low brick fireplace, full of fire, an old blue

'No, I won't,' he replied.

Turkish rug, the little oak table with the lamp and the white-So, with a curious humility, she placed him the little cup and-blue cloth and the dessert, and Gudrun making coffee in of coffee, and herself took the awkward tumbler. She seemed an odd brass coffee-maker, and Winifred scalding a little milk to want to serve him.

in a tiny saucepan.

'Why don't you give me the glass—it is so clumsy for you,'

'Have you had coffee?' said Gudrun.

he said. He would much rather have had it, and seen her dain-

'I have, but I'll have some more with you,' he replied.

tily served. But she was silent, pleased with the disparity, with

'Then you must have it in a glass—there are only two her self-abasement.

cups,' said Winifred.

'You are quite EN MENAGE,' he said.

'It is the same to me,' he said, taking a chair and coming

'Yes. We aren't really at home to visitors,' said Winifred.

into the charmed circle of the girls. How happy they were,

'You're not? Then I'm an intruder?'

how cosy and glamorous it was with them, in a world of lofty For once he felt his conventional dress was out of place, he shadows! The outside world, in which he had been transact-was an outsider.

ing funeral business all the day was completely wiped out. In Gudrun was very quiet. She did not feel drawn to talk to an instant he snuffed glamour and magic.

him. At this stage, silence was best—or mere light words. It They had all their things very dainty, two odd and lovely was best to leave serious things aside. So they talked gaily and little cups, scarlet and solid gilt, and a little black jug with lightly, till they heard the man below lead out the horse, and **Contents**



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call it to 'back-back!' into the dog-cart that was to take Gudrun suspended in chains of invisible physical life.

home. So she put on her things, and shook hands with Gerald, At first he was quiet, he kept still, expecting the extremity without once meeting his eyes. And she was gone.

to pass away, expecting to find himself released into the world The funeral was detestable. Afterwards, at the tea-table, of the living, after this extremity of penance. But it did not the daughters kept saying—'He was a good father to us—the pass, and a crisis gained upon him.

best father in the world'—or else—'We shan't easily find an-As the evening of the third day came on, his heart rang other man as good as father was.'

with fear. He could not bear another night. Another night Gerald acquiesced in all this. It was the right conventional was coming on, for another night he was to be suspended in attitude, and, as far as the world went, he believed in the chain of physical life, over the bottomless pit of nothingness.

conventions. He took it as a matter of course. But Winifred And he could not bear it. He could not bear it. He was fright-hated everything, and hid in the studio, and cried her heart ened deeply, and coldly, frightened in his soul. He did not out, and wished Gudrun would come.

believe in his own strength any more. He could not fall into Luckily everybody was going away. The Criches never this infinite void, and rise again. If he fell, he would be gone stayed long at home. By dinner-time, Gerald was left quite for ever. He must withdraw, he must seek reinforcements. He alone. Even Winifred was carried off to London, for a few did not believe in his own single self, any further than this.

days with her sister Laura.

After dinner, faced with the ultimate experience of his But when Gerald was really left alone, he could not bear own nothingness, he turned aside. He pulled on his boots, it. One day passed by, and another. And all the time he was put on his coat, and set out to walk in the night.

like a man hung in chains over the edge of an abyss. Struggle It was dark and misty. He went through the wood, stum-as he might, he could not turn himself to the solid earth, he bling and feeling his way to the Mill. Birkin was away. Good— could not get footing. He was suspended on the edge of a he was half glad. He turned up the hill, and stumbled blindly void, writhing. Whatever he thought of, was the abyss—

over the wild slopes, having lost the path in the complete whether it were friends or strangers, or work or play, it all darkness. It was boring. Where was he going? No matter. He showed him only the same bottomless void, in which his heart stumbled on till he came to a path again. Then he went on swung perishing. There was no escape, there was nothing to through another wood. His mind became dark, he went on grasp hold of. He must writhe on the edge of the chasm, automatically. Without thought or sensation, he stumbled **Contents**



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unevenly on, out into the open again, fumbling for stiles, los-mar School, and came to Willey Green Church. The church-ing the path, and going along the hedges of the fields till he yard! He halted.

came to the outlet.

Then in another moment he had clambered up the wall And at last he came to the high road. It had distracted and was going among the graves. Even in this darkness he him to struggle blindly through the maze of darkness. But could see the heaped pallor of old white flowers at his feet.

now, he must take a direction. And he did not even know This then was the grave. He stooped down. The flowers were where he was. But he must take a direction now. Nothing cold and clammy. There was a raw scent of chrysanthemums would be resolved by merely walking, walking away. He had and tube-roses, deadened. He felt the clay beneath, and shrank, to take a direction.

it was so horribly cold and sticky. He stood away in revulsion.

He stood still on the road, that was high in the utterly Here was one centre then, here in the complete darkness dark night, and he did not know where he was. It was a strange beside the unseen, raw grave. But there was nothing for him sensation, his heart beating, and ringed round with the ut-here. No, he had nothing to stay here for. He felt as if some of terly unknown darkness. So he stood for some time.

the clay were sticking cold and unclean, on his heart. No, Then he heard footsteps, and saw a small, swinging light.

enough of this.

He immediately went towards this. It was a miner.

Where then?—home? Never! It was no use going there.

'Can you tell me,' he said, 'where this road goes?'

That was less than no use. It could not be done. There was

'Road? Ay, it goes ter Whatmore.'

somewhere else to go. Where?

'Whatmore! Oh thank you, that's right. I thought I was A dangerous resolve formed in his heart, like a fixed idea.

wrong. Good-night.'

There was Gudrun—she would be safe in her home. But he

'Good-night,' replied the broad voice of the miner.

could get at her—he would get at her. He would not go back Gerald guessed where he was. At least, when he came to tonight till he had come to her, if it cost him his life. He Whatmore, he would know. He was glad to be on a high staked his all on this throw.

road. He walked forward as in a sleep of decision.

He set off walking straight across the fields towards That was Whatmore Village—? Yes, the King's Head—

Beldover. It was so dark, nobody could ever see him. His feet and there the hall gates. He descended the steep hill almost were wet and cold, heavy with clay. But he went on persis-running. Winding through the hollow, he passed the Gram-tently, like a wind, straight forward, as if to his fate. There **Contents**



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were great gaps in his consciousness. He was conscious that

'Somerset Drive, for certain!' said the collier, swinging his he was at Winthorpe hamlet, but quite unconscious how he arm as if catching something up. 'Somerset Drive—yi! I had got there. And then, as in a dream, he was in the long couldn't for my life lay hold o' the lercality o' the place. Yis, I street of Beldover, with its street-lamps.

know the place, to be sure I do—'

There was a noise of voices, and of a door shutting loudly, He turned unsteadily on his feet, and pointed up the dark, and being barred, and of men talking in the night. The 'Lord nighdeserted road.

Nelson' had just closed, and the drinkers were going home.

'You go up theer—an' you ta'e th' first—yi, th' first turnin'

He had better ask one of these where she lived—for he did on your left—o' that side—past Withamses tuffy shop—'

not know the side streets at all.

'I know,' said Gerald.

'Can you tell me where Somerset Drive is?' he asked of

'Ay! You go down a bit, past wheer th' water-man lives—

one of the uneven men.

and then Somerset Drive, as they ca' it, branches off on 't

'Where what?' replied the tipsy miner's voice.

right hand side—an' there's nowt but three houses in it, no

'Somerset Drive.'

more than three, I believe,—an' I'm a'most certain as theirs is

'Somerset Drive!—I've heard o' such a place, but I couldn't th' last—th' last o' th' three—you see—'

for my life say where it is. Who might you be wanting?'

'Thank you very much,' said Gerald. 'Good-night.'

'Mr Brangwen—William Brangwen.'

And he started off, leaving the tipsy man there standing

'William Brangwen—?—?'

rooted.

'Who teaches at the Grammar School, at Willey Green—

Gerald went past the dark shops and houses, most of them his daughter teaches there too.'

sleeping now, and twisted round to the little blind road that

'O-o-o-oh, Brangwen! NOW I've got you. Of COURSE, ended on a field of darkness. He slowed down, as he neared William Brangwen! Yes, yes, he's got two lasses as teachers, his goal, not knowing how he should proceed. What if the aside hisself. Ay, that's him—that's him! Why certainly I know house were closed in darkness?

where he lives, back your life I do! Yi—WHAT place do But it was not. He saw a big lighted window, and heard they ca' it?'

voices, then a gate banged. His quick ears caught the sound of

'Somerset Drive,' repeated Gerald patiently. He knew his Birkin's voice, his keen eyes made out Birkin, with Ursula own colliers fairly well.

standing in a pale dress on the step of the garden path. Then

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Ursula stepped down, and came along the road, holding Birkin's breathing. Again, corresponding to the door below, there was arm.

a door again. That would be the mother's room. He could Gerald went across into the darkness and they dawdled hear her moving about in the candlelight. She would be ex-past him, talking happily, Birkin's voice low, Ursula's high and pecting her husband to come up. He looked along the dark distinct. Gerald went quickly to the house.

landing.

The blinds were drawn before the big, lighted window of Then, silently, on infinitely careful feet, he went along the the diningroom. Looking up the path at the side he could see passage, feeling the wall with the extreme tips of his fingers.

the door left open, shedding a soft, coloured light from the There was a door. He stood and listened. He could hear two hall lamp. He went quickly and silently up the path, and people's breathing. It was not that. He went stealthily for-looked up into the hall. There were pictures on the walls, and ward. There was another door, slightly open. The room was in the antlers of a stag—and the stairs going up on one side—darkness. Empty. Then there was the bathroom, he could smell and just near the foot of the stairs the half opened door of the the soap and the heat. Then at the end another bedroom—

diningroom.

one soft breathing. This was she.

With heart drawn fine, Gerald stepped into the hall, whose With an almost occult carefulness he turned the door floor was of coloured tiles, went quickly and looked into the handle, and opened the door an inch. It creaked slightly. Then large, pleasant room. In a chair by the fire, the father sat asleep, he opened it another inch—then another. His heart did not his head tilted back against the side of the big oak chimney beat, he seemed to create a silence about himself, an oblivi-piece, his ruddy face seen foreshortened, the nostrils open, ousness.

the mouth fallen a little. It would take the merest sound to He was in the room. Still the sleeper breathed softly. It wake him.

was very dark. He felt his way forward inch by inch, with his Gerald stood a second suspended. He glanced down the feet and hands. He touched the bed, he could hear the sleeper.

passage behind him. It was all dark. Again he was suspended.

He drew nearer, bending close as if his eyes would disclose Then he went swiftly upstairs. His senses were so finely, al-whatever there was. And then, very near to his face, to his fear, most supernaturally keen, that he seemed to cast his own will he saw the round, dark head of a boy.

over the half-unconscious house.

He recovered, turned round, saw the door ajar, a faint light He came to the first landing. There he stood, scarcely revealed. And he retreated swiftly, drew the door to without

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fastening it, and passed rapidly down the passage. At the head heard her sitting up in bed. In another moment she would of the stairs he hesitated. There was still time to flee.

scream.

But it was unthinkable. He would maintain his will. He

'No, it's me,' he said, feeling his way towards her. 'It is I, turned past the door of the parental bedroom like a shadow, Gerald.'

and was climbing the second flight of stairs. They creaked She sat motionless in her bed in sheer astonishment. She under his weight—it was exasperating. Ah what disaster, if was too astonished, too much taken by surprise, even to be the mother's door opened just beneath him, and she saw him!

afraid.

It would have to be, if it were so. He held the control still.

'Gerald!' she echoed, in blank amazement. He had found He was not quite up these stairs when he heard a quick his way to the bed, and his outstretched hand touched her running of feet below, the outer door was closed and locked, warm breast blindly. She shrank away.

he heard Ursula's voice, then the father's sleepy exclamation.

'Let me make a light,' she said, springing out.

He pressed on swiftly to the upper landing.

He stood perfectly motionless. He heard her touch the Again a door was ajar, a room was empty. Feeling his way match-box, he heard her fingers in their

movement. Then he forward, with the tips of his fingers, travelling rapidly, like a saw her in the light of a match, which she held to the candle.

blind man, anxious lest Ursula should come upstairs, he found The light rose in the room, then sank to a small dimness, as another door. There, with his preternaturally fine sense alert, the flame sank down on the candle, before it mounted again.

he listened. He heard someone moving in bed. This would be She looked at him, as he stood near the other side of the she.

bed. His cap was pulled low over his brow, his black overcoat Softly now, like one who has only one sense, the tactile was buttoned close up to his chin. His face was strange and sense, he turned the latch. It clicked. He held still. The bed-luminous. He was inevitable as a supernatural being. When clothes rustled. His heart did not beat. Then again he drew she had seen him, she knew. She knew there was something the latch back, and very gently pushed the door. It made a fatal in the situation, and she must accept it. Yet she must sticking noise as it gave.

challenge him.

'Ursula?' said Gudrun's voice, frightened. He quickly

'How did you come up?' she asked.

opened the door and pushed it behind him.

'I walked up the stairs—the door was open.'

'Is it you, Ursula?' came Gudrun's frightened voice. He She looked at him.

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'I haven't closed this door, either,' he said. She walked

'What do you want of me?' she repeated in an estranged swiftly across the room, and closed her door, softly, and locked voice.

it. Then she came back.

He pulled off his cap, in a movement of dream-liberation, She was wonderful, with startled eyes and flushed cheeks, and went across to her. But he could not touch her, because and her plait of hair rather short and thick down her back, she stood barefoot in her night-dress, and he was muddy and and her long, fine white night-dress falling to her feet.

damp. Her eyes, wide and large and wondering, watched him, She saw that his boots were all clayey, even his trousers and asked him the ultimate question.

were plastered with clay. And she wondered if he had made

'I came—because I must,' he said. 'Why do you ask?'

footprints all the way up. He was a very strange figure, stand-She looked at him in doubt and wonder.

ing in her bedroom, near the tossed bed.

'I must ask,' she said.

'Why have you come?' she asked, almost querulous.

He shook his head slightly.

'I wanted to,' he replied.

'There is no answer,' he replied, with strange vacancy.

And this she could see from his face. It was fate.

There was about him a curious, and almost godlike air of

'You are so muddy,' she said, in distaste, but gently.

simplicity and native directness. He reminded her of an ap-He looked down at his feet.

parition, the young Hermes.

'I was walking in the dark,' he replied. But he felt vividly

'But why did you come to me?' she persisted.

elated. There was a pause. He stood on one side of the tumbled

'Because—it has to be so. If there weren't you in the world, bed, she on the other. He did not even take his cap from his then I shouldn't be in the world, either.'

brows.

She stood looking at him, with large, wide, wondering,

'And what do you want of me,' she challenged.

stricken eyes. His eyes were looking steadily into hers all the He looked aside, and did not answer. Save for the extreme time, and he seemed fixed in an odd supernatural steadfast-beauty and mystic attractiveness of this distinct, strange face, ness. She sighed. She was lost now. She had no choice.

she would have sent him away. But his face was too wonder-

'Won't you take off your boots,' she said. 'They must be ful and

undiscovered to her. It fascinated her with the fasci-wet.'

nation of pure beauty, cast a spell on her, like nostalgia, an He dropped his cap on a chair, unbuttoned his overcoat, ache.

lifting up his chin to unfasten the throat buttons. His short,

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keen hair was ruffled. He was so beautifully blond, like wheat.

of the sun. His blood, which seemed to have been drawn back He pulled off his overcoat.

into death, came ebbing on the return, surely, beautifully, Quickly he pulled off his jacket, pulled loose his black tie, powerfully.

and was unfastening his studs, which were headed each with He felt his limbs growing fuller and flexible with life, his a pearl. She listened, watching, hoping no one would hear the body gained an unknown strength. He was a man again, strong starched linen crackle. It seemed to snap like pistol shots.

and rounded. And he was a child, so soothed and restored He had come for vindication. She let him hold her in his and full of gratitude.

arms, clasp her close against him. He found in her an infinite And she, she

was the great bath of life, he worshipped her.

relief. Into her he poured all his pent-up darkness and corro-Mother and substance of all life she was. And he, child and sive death, and he was whole again. It was wonderful, marvel-man, received of her and was made whole. His pure body was lous, it was a miracle. This was the everrecurrent miracle of almost killed. But the miraculous, soft effluence of her breast his life, at the knowledge of which he was lost in an ecstasy of suffused over him, over his seared, damaged brain, like a heal-relief and wonder. And she, subject, received him as a vessel ing lymph, like a soft, soothing flow of life itself, perfect as if filled with his bitter potion of death. She had no power at he were bathed in the womb again.

this crisis to resist. The terrible frictional violence of death His brain was hurt, seared, the tissue was as if destroyed.

filled her, and she received it in an ecstasy of subjection, in He had not known how hurt he was, how his tissue, the very throes of acute, violent sensation.

tissue of his brain was damaged by the corrosive flood of death.

As he drew nearer to her, he plunged deeper into her en-Now, as the healing lymph of her effluence flowed through veloping soft warmth, a wonderful creative heat that pen-him, he knew how destroyed he was, like a plant whose tissue etrated his veins and gave him life again. He felt himself disis burst from inwards by a frost.

solving and sinking to rest in the bath of her living strength.

He buried his small, hard head between her breasts, and It seemed as if her heart in her breast were a second uncon-pressed her breasts against him with his hands. And she with querable sun, into the glow and creative strength of which he quivering hands pressed his head against her, as he lay suf-plunged further and further. All his veins, that were mur-fused out, and she lay fully conscious. The lovely creative dered and lacerated, healed softly as life came pulsing in, steal-warmth flooded through him like a sleep of fecundity within ing invisibly in to him as if it were the all-powerful effluence the womb. Ah,

if only she would grant him the flow of this **Contents**



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living effluence, he would be restored, he would be complete motionless. She moved, she became selfconscious. She wanted again. He was afraid she would deny him before it was fin-to look at him, to see him.

ished. Like a child at the breast, he cleaved intensely to her, But she dared not make a light, because she knew he would and she could not put him away. And his seared, ruined mem-wake, and she did not want to break his perfect sleep, that she brane relaxed, softened, that which was seared and stiff and knew he had got of her.

blasted yielded again, became soft and flexible, palpitating She disengaged herself, softly, and rose up a little to look with new life. He was infinitely grateful, as to God, or as an at him. There was a faint light, it seemed to her, in the room.

infant is at its mother's breast. He was glad and grateful like a She could just distinguish his features, as he slept the perfect delirium, as he felt his own wholeness come over him again, as sleep. In this darkness, she seemed to see him so distinctly.

he felt the full, unutterable sleep coming over him, the sleep But he was far off, in another world. Ah, she could shriek of complete exhaustion and restoration.

with torment, he was so far off, and perfected, in another But Gudrun lay wide awake, destroyed into perfect con-world. She seemed to look at him as at a pebble far away sciousness. She lay motionless, with wide eyes staring mounder clear dark water. And here was she, left with all the tionless into the darkness, whilst he was sunk away in sleep, anguish of consciousness, whilst he was sunk deep into the his arms round her.

other element of mindless, remote, living shadow-gleam. He She seemed to be hearing waves break on a hidden shore, was beautiful, far-off, and perfected. They would never be long, slow, gloomy waves, breaking with the rhythm of fate, together. Ah, this awful, inhuman distance which would al-so monotonously that it seemed eternal. This endless break-ways be interposed between her and the other being!

ing of slow, sullen waves of fate held her life a possession, There was nothing to do but to lie still and endure. She whilst she lay with dark, wide eyes looking into the darkness.

felt an overwhelming tenderness for him, and a dark, under-She could see so far, as far as eternity—yet she saw nothing.

stirring of jealous hatred, that he should lie so perfect and She was suspended in perfect consciousness—and of what immune, in an otherworld, whilst she was tormented with was she conscious?

violent wakefulness, cast out in the outer darkness.

This mood of extremity, when she lay staring into eter-She lay in intense and vivid consciousness, an exhausting nity, utterly suspended, and conscious of everything, to the superconsciousness. The church clock struck the hours, it last limits, passed and left her uneasy. She had lain so long seemed to her, in quick succession. She heard them distinctly **Contents**



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in the tension of her vivid consciousness. And he slept as if juxtaposition against her.

time were one moment, unchanging and unmoving.

The last hour was the longest. And yet, at last it passed.

She was exhausted, wearied. Yet she must continue in this Her heart leapt with relief—yes, there was the slow, strong state of violent active superconsciousness. She was conscious stroke of the church clock—at last, after this night of eternity.

of everything—her childhood, her girlhood, all the forgotten She waited to catch each slow, fatal reverberation. 'Three—

incidents, all the unrealised influences and all the happenings four—five!' There, it was finished. A weight rolled off her.

she had not understood, pertaining to herself, to her family, She raised herself, leaned over him tenderly, and kissed to her friends, her lovers, her acquaintances, everybody. It was him. She was sad to wake him. After a few moments, she as if she drew a glittering rope of knowledge out of the sea of kissed him again. But he did not stir. The darling, he was so darkness, drew and drew and drew it out of the fathomless deep in sleep! What a shame to take him out of it. She let depths of the past, and still it did not come to an end, there him lie a little longer. But he must go—he must really go.

was no end to it, she must haul and haul at the rope of glitter-With full overtenderness she took his face between her ing consciousness, pull it out phosphorescent from the end-hands, and kissed his eyes. The eyes opened, he remained less depths of the unconsciousness, till she was weary, aching, motionless, looking at her. Her heart stood still. To hide her exhausted, and fit to break, and yet she had not done.

face from his dreadful opened eyes, in the darkness, she bent Ah, if only she might wake him! She turned uneasily.

down and kissed him, whispering:

When could she rouse him and send him away? When could

'You must go, my love.'

she disturb him? And she relapsed into her activity of auto-But she was sick with terror, sick.

matic consciousness, that would never end.

He put his arms round her. Her heart sank.

But the time was drawing near when she could wake him.

'But you must go, my love. It's late.'

It was like a release. The clock had struck four, outside in the

'What time is it?' he said.

night. Thank God the night had passed almost away. At five Strange, his man's voice. She quivered. It was an intoler-he must go, and she would be released. Then she could relax able oppression to her.

and fill her own place. Now she was driven up against his

'Past five o'clock,' she said.

perfect sleeping motion like a knife white-hot on a grind-But he only closed his arms round her again. Her heart stone. There was something monstrous about him, about his cried within her in torture. She disengaged herself firmly.

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'You really must go,' she said.

At once, without answering, he pulled them off again, and

'Not for a minute,' he said.

stood holding them in his hand. She had thrust her feet into She lay still, nestling against him, but unyielding.

slippers, and flung a loose robe round her. She was ready. She

'Not for a minute,' he repeated, clasping her closer.

looked at him as he stood waiting, his black coat buttoned to

'Yes,' she said, unyielding, 'I'm afraid if you stay any longer.'

the chin, his cap pulled down, his boots in his hand. And the There was a certain coldness in her voice that made him passionate almost hateful fascination revived in her for a mo-release her, and she broke away, rose and lit the candle. That ment. It was not exhausted. His face was so warmlooking, then was the end.

wide-eyed and full of newness, so perfect. She felt old, old.

He got up. He was warm and full of life and desire. Yet he She went to him heavily, to be kissed. He kissed her quickly.

felt a little bit ashamed, humiliated, putting on his clothes She wished his warm, expressionless beauty did not so fatally before her, in the candlelight. For he felt revealed, exposed to put a spell on her, compel her and subjugate her. It was a her, at a time when she was in some way against him. It was burden upon her, that she resented, but could not escape. Yet all very difficult to understand. He dressed himself quickly, when she looked at his straight man's brows, and at his rather without collar or tie. Still he felt full and complete, perfected.

small, well-shaped nose, and at his blue, indifferent eyes, she She thought it humiliating to see a man dressing: the ridicu-knew her passion for him was not yet satisfied, perhaps never lous shirt, the ridiculous trousers and braces. But again an could be satisfied. Only now she was weary, with an ache like idea saved her.

nausea. She wanted him gone.

'It is like a workman getting up to go to work,' thought They went downstairs quickly. It seemed they made a pro-Gudrun. 'And I am like a workman's wife.' But an ache like digious noise. He followed her as, wrapped in her vivid green nausea was upon her: a nausea of him.

wrap, she preceded him with the light. She suffered badly He pushed his collar and tie into his overcoat pocket. Then with fear, lest her people should be roused. He hardly cared.

he sat down and pulled on his boots. They were sodden, as He did not care now who knew. And she hated this in him.

were his socks and trouser-bottoms. But he himself was quick One MUST be cautious. One must preserve oneself.

and warm.

She led the way to the kitchen. It was neat and tidy, as the

'Perhaps you ought to have put your boots on downstairs,'

woman had left it. He looked up at the clock—twenty min-she said.

utes past five Then he sat down on a chair to put on his boots.

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She waited, watching his every movement. She wanted it to be over, it was a great nervous strain on her.

He stood up—she unbolted the back door, and looked out. A cold, raw night, not yet dawn, with a piece of a moon in the vague sky. She was glad she need not go out.

'Good-bye then,' he murmured.

'I'll come to the gate,' she said.

And again she hurried on in front, to warn him of the steps. And at the gate, once more she stood on the step whilst he stood below her.

'Good-bye,' she whispered.

Chapter 25.

He kissed her dutifully, and turned away.

Marriage or not.

She suffered torments hearing his firm tread going so distinctly down the road. Ah, the insensitiveness of that firm The Brangwen family was going to move from Beldover.

tread!

It was necessary now for the father to be in town.

She closed the gate, and crept quickly and noiselessly back Birkin had taken out a marriage licence, yet Ursula de-to bed. When she was in her room, and the door closed, and ferred from day to day. She would not fix any definite time— all safe, she breathed freely, and a great weight fell off her. She she still wavered. Her month's notice to leave the Grammar nestled down in bed, in the groove his body had made, in the School was in its third week. Christmas was not far off.

warmth he had left. And excited, worn-out, yet still satisfied, Gerald waited for the Ursula-Birkin marriage. It was some-she fell soon into a deep, heavy sleep.

thing crucial to him.

Gerald walked quickly through the raw darkness of the

'Shall we make it a double-barrelled affair?' he said to Birkin coming dawn. He met nobody. His mind was beautifully still one day.

and thoughtless, like a still pool, and his body full and warm

'Who for the second shot?' asked Birkin.

and rich. He went quickly along towards Shortlands, in a grate-

'Gudrun and me,' said Gerald, the venturesome twinkle in ful self-sufficiency.

his eyes.

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Birkin looked at him steadily, as if somewhat taken aback.

quizzically, his head a little on one side.

'Serious—or joking?' he asked.

Birkin laughed quickly.

'Oh, serious. Shall I? Shall Gudrun and I rush in along

'How do I know what it will be!' he said. 'Don't lambaste with you?'

me with my own parallels-'

'Do by all means,' said Birkin. 'I didn't know you'd got Gerald pondered a while.

that length.'

'But I should like to know your opinion, exactly,' he said.

'What length?' said Gerald, looking at the other man, and

'On your marriage?—or marrying? Why should you want laughing.

my opinion? I've got no opinions. I'm not interested in legal

'Oh yes, we've gone all the lengths.'

marriage, one way or another. It's a mere question of conve-

'There remains to put it on a broad social basis, and to nience.'

achieve a high moral purpose,' said Birkin.

Still Gerald watched him closely.

'Something like that: the length and breadth and height

'More than that, I think,' he said seriously. 'However you of it,' replied Gerald, smiling.

may be bored by the ethics of marriage, yet really to marry, in

'Oh well,' said Birkin,' it's a very admirable step to take, I one's own personal case, is something critical, final-'

should say.'

'You mean there is something final in going to the regis-Gerald looked at him closely.

trar with a woman?'

'Why aren't you enthusiastic?' he asked. 'I thought you

'If you're coming back with her, I do,' said Gerald. 'It is in were such dead nuts on marriage.'

some way irrevocable.'

Birkin lifted his shoulders.

'Yes, I agree,' said Birkin.

'One might as well be dead nuts on noses. There are all

'No matter how one regards legal marriage, yet to enter sorts of noses, snub and otherwise-'

into the married state, in one's own personal instance, is final-Gerald laughed.

,

'And all sorts of marriage, also snub and otherwise?' he

'I believe it is,' said Birkin, 'somewhere.'

said.

'The question remains then, should one do it,' said Gerald.

'That's it.'

Birkin watched him narrowly, with amused eyes.

'And you think if I marry, it will be snub?' asked Gerald

'You are like Lord Bacon, Gerald,' he said. 'You argue it

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like a lawyer—or like Hamlet's to-be-or-not-to-be. If I were about it. But as I say, what's the alternative.'

you I would NOT marry: but ask Gudrun, not me. You're

'One should avoid this HOME instinct. It's not an in-not marrying me, are you?'

stinct, it's a habit of cowardliness. One should never have a Gerald did not heed the latter part of this speech.

HOME.'

'Yes,' he said, 'one must consider it coldly. It is something

'I agree really,' said Gerald. 'But there's no alternative.'

critical. One comes to the point where one must take a step in

'We've got to find one. I do believe in a permanent union one direction or another. And marriage is one direction-'

between a man and a woman. Chopping about is merely an

'And what is the other?' asked Birkin quickly.

exhaustive process. But a permanent relation between a man Gerald looked up at him with hot, strangely-conscious eyes, and a woman isn't the last word —it certainly isn't.'

that the other man could not understand.

'Quite,' said Gerald.

'I can't say,' he replied. 'If I knew THAT—' He moved

'In fact,' said Birkin, 'because the relation between man uneasily on his feet, and did not finish.

and woman is made the supreme and exclusive relationship,

'You mean if you knew the alternative?' asked Birkin. 'And that's where all the tightness and meanness and insufficiency since you don't know it, marriage is a PIS ALLER.'

comes in.'

Gerald looked up at Birkin with the same hot, constrained

'Yes, I believe you,' said Gerald.

eyes.

'You've got to take down the love-and-marriage ideal from

'One does have the feeling that marriage is a PIS ALLER,'

its pedestal. We want something broader. I believe in the he admitted.

ADDITIONAL perfect relationship between man and

'Then don't do it,' said Birkin. 'I tell you,' he went on, 'the man—additional to marriage.'

same as I've said before, marriage in the old sense seems to me

'I can never see how they can be the same,' said Gerald.

repulsive. EGOISME A DEUX is nothing to it. It's a sort of

'Not the same—but equally important, equally creative, tacit hunting in couples: the world all in couples, each couple equally sacred, if you like.'

in its own little house, watching its own little interests, and

'I know,' said Gerald, 'you believe something like that. Only stewing in its own little privacy—it's the most repulsive thing I can't FEEL it, you see.' He put his hand on Birkin's arm, on earth.'

with a sort of deprecating affection. And he smiled as if tri-

'I quite agree,' said Gerald. 'There's something inferior umphantly.

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He was ready to be doomed. Marriage was like a doom to him. He was willing to condemn himself in marriage, to become like a convict condemned to the mines of the underworld, living no life in the sun, but having a dreadful subterranean activity. He was willing to accept this. And marriage was the seal of his condemnation. He was willing to be sealed thus in the underworld, like a soul damned but living forever in damnation. But he would not make any pure relationship with any other soul. He could not. Marriage was not the committing of himself into a relationship with Gudrun. It was a committing of himself in acceptance of the established world, Chapter 26.

he would accept the established order, in which he did not *A chair*.

livingly believe, and then he would retreat to the underworld for his life. This he would do.

There was a jumble market every Monday afternoon in The other way was to accept Rupert's offer of alliance, to the old market-place in town. Ursula and Birkin strayed down enter into the bond of pure trust and love with the other there one afternoon. They had been talking of furniture, and man, and then subsequently with the woman. If he pledged they wanted to see if there was

any fragment they would like himself with the man he would later be able to pledge him-to buy, amid the heaps of rubbish collected on the cobble-self with the woman: not merely in legal marriage, but in stones.

absolute, mystic marriage.

The old market-square was not very large, a mere bare Yet he could not accept the offer. There was a numbness patch of granite setts, usually with a few fruit-stalls under a upon him, a numbness either of unborn, absent volition, or of wall. It was in a poor quarter of the town. Meagre houses atrophy. Perhaps it was the absence of volition. For he was stood down one side, there was a hosiery factory, a great blank strangely elated at Rupert's offer. Yet he was still more glad to with myriad oblong windows, at the end, a street of little reject it, not to be committed.

shops with flagstone pavement down the other side, and, for a crowning monument, the public baths, of new red brick, with

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a clock-tower. The people who moved about seemed stumpy

'Look,' said Birkin, 'there is a pretty chair.'

and sordid, the air seemed to smell rather dirty, there was a

'Charming!' cried Ursula. 'Oh, charming.'

sense of many mean streets ramifying off into warrens of It was an arm-chair of simple wood, probably birch, but meanness. Now and again a great chocolate-and-yellow tramcar of such fine delicacy of grace, standing there on the sordid ground round a difficult bend under the hosiery factory.

stones, it almost brought tears to the eyes. It was square in Ursula was superficially thrilled when she found herself shape, of the purest, slender lines, and four short lines of wood out among the common people, in the jumbled place piled in the back, that reminded Ursula of harpstrings.

with old bedding, heaps of old iron, shabby crockery in pale

'It was once,' said Birkin, 'gilded—and it had a cane seat.

lots, muffled lots of unthinkable clothing. She and Birkin Somebody has nailed this wooden seat in. Look, here is a trifle went unwillingly down the narrow aisle between the rusty of the red that underlay the gilt. The rest is all black, except wares. He was looking at the goods, she at the people.

where the wood is worn pure and glossy. It is the fine unity of She excitedly watched a young woman, who was going to the lines that is so attractive. Look, how they run and meet have a baby, and who was turning over a mattress and making and counteract. But of course the wooden seat is wrong —it a young man, down-at-heel and dejected, feel it also. So se-destroys the perfect lightness and unity in tension the cane cretive and active and anxious the young woman seemed, so gave. I like it though—'

reluctant, slinking, the young man. He was going to marry

'Ah yes,' said Ursula, 'so do I.'

her because she was having a child.

'How much is it?' Birkin asked the man.

When they had felt the mattress, the young woman asked

'Ten shillings.'

the old man seated on a stool among his wares, how much it

'And you will send it—?'

was. He told her, and she turned to the young man. The latter It was bought.

was ashamed, and selfconscious. He turned his face away,

'So beautiful, so pure!' Birkin said. 'It almost breaks my though he left his body standing there, and muttered aside.

heart.' They walked along between the heaps of rubbish. 'My And again the woman anxiously and actively fingered the beloved country—it had something to express even when it mattress and added up in her mind and bargained with the made that chair.'

old, unclean man. All the while, the young man stood by,

'And hasn't it now?' asked Ursula. She was always angry shamefaced and down-at-heel, submitting.

when he took this tone.

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'No, it hasn't. When I see that clear, beautiful chair, and I sky shining beyond the tower of the public baths, and he think of England, even Jane Austen's England—it had living seemed to get over it all. He laughed.

thoughts to unfold even then, and pure happiness in unfold-

'All right,' he said, 'then let us not have it. I'm sick of it all, ing them. And now, we can only fish among the rubbish heaps too. At any rate one can't go on living on the old bones of for the remnants of their old expression. There is no produc-beauty.'

tion in us now, only sordid and foul mechanicalness.'

'One can't,' she cried. 'I DON'T want old things.'

'It isn't true,' cried Ursula. 'Why must you always praise

'The truth is, we don't want things at all,' he replied. 'The the past, at the expense of the present? REALLY, I don't thought of a house and furniture of my own is hateful to me.'

think so much of Jane Austen's England. It was materialistic This startled her for a moment. Then she replied: enough, if you like—'

'So it is to me. But one must live somewhere.'

'It could afford to be materialistic,' said Birkin, 'because it

'Not somewhere—anywhere,' he said. 'One should just live had the power to be something other—which we haven't. We anywhere—not have a definite place. I don't want a definite are materialistic because we haven't the power to be anything place. As soon as you get a room, and it is COMPLETE, you else—try as we may, we can't bring off anything but material-want to run from it. Now my rooms at the Mill are quite ism: mechanism, the very soul of materialism.'

complete, I want them at the bottom of the sea. It is a hor-Ursula was subdued into angry silence. She did not heed rible tyranny of a fixed milieu, where each piece of furniture what he said. She was rebelling against

something else.

is a commandment-stone.'

'And I hate your past. I'm sick of it,' she cried. 'I believe I She clung to his arm as they walked away from the mar-even hate that old chair, though it IS beautiful. It isn't MY

ket.

sort of beauty. I wish it had been smashed up when its day

'But what are we going to do?' she said. 'We must live was over, not left to preach the beloved past to us. I'm sick of somehow. And I do want some beauty in my surroundings. I the beloved past.'

want a sort of natural GRANDEUR even, SPLENDOUR.'

'Not so sick as I am of the accursed present,' he said.

'You'll never get it in houses and furniture—or even clothes.

'Yes, just the same. I hate the present—but I don't want Houses and furniture and clothes, they are all terms of an old the past to take its place—I don't want that old chair.'

base world, a detestable society of man. And if you have a He was rather angry for a moment. Then he looked at the Tudor house and old, beautiful furniture, it is only the past

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perpetuated on top of you, horrible. And if you have a perfect faced youth. She was fair, rather short, stout. He was of me-modern house done for you by Poiret, it is something else dium height, attractively built. His dark hair fell sideways perpetuated on top of you. It is all horrible. It is all posses-over his brow, from under his cap, he stood strangely aloof, sions, possessions, bullying you and turning you into a like one of the damned.

generalisation. You have to be like Rodin, Michelangelo, and

'Let us give it to THEM,' whispered Ursula. 'Look they leave a piece of raw rock unfinished to your figure. You must are getting a home together.'

leave your surroundings sketchy, unfinished, so that you are

'I won't aid abet them in it,' he said petulantly, instantly never contained, never confined, never dominated from the sympathising with the aloof, furtive youth, against the active, outside.'

procreant female.

She stood in the street contemplating.

'Oh yes,' cried Ursula. 'It's right for them—there's noth-

'And we are never to have a complete place of our own—

ing else for them.'

never a home?' she said.

'Very well,' said Birkin, 'you offer it to them. I'll watch.'

'Pray God, in this world, no,' he answered.

Ursula went rather nervously to the young couple, who

'But there's only this world,' she objected.

were discussing an iron washstand—or rather, the man was He spread out his hands with a gesture of indifference.

glancing furtively and wonderingly, like a prisoner, at the

'Meanwhile, then, we'll avoid having things of our own,'

abominable article, whilst the woman was arguing.

he said.

'We bought a chair,' said Ursula, 'and we don't want it.

'But you've just bought a chair,' she said.

Would you have it? We should be glad if you would.'

'I can tell the man I don't want it,' he replied.

The young couple looked round at her, not believing that She pondered again. Then a queer little movement she could be addressing them.

twitched her face.

'Would you care for it?' repeated Ursula. 'It's really VERY

'No,' she said, 'we don't want it. I'm sick of old things.'

pretty—but—' she smiled rather dazzlingly.

'New ones as well,' he said.

The young couple only stared at her, and looked signifi-They retraced their steps.

cantly at each other, to know what to do. And the man curi-There—in front of some furniture, stood the young couple, ously obliterated himself, as if he could make himself invis-the woman who was going to have a baby, and the narrowible, as a rat can.

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'We wanted to GIVE it to you,' explained Ursula, now tures. The man jerked his head a little on one side, indicating overcome with confusion and dread of them. She was attracted Ursula, and said, with curious amiable, jeering warmth: by the young man. He was a still, mindless creature, hardly a 'What she warnt?—eh?' An odd smile writhed his lips.

man at all, a creature that the towns have produced, strangely Birkin looked at him from under his slack, ironical eye-pure-bred and fine in one sense, furtive, quick, subtle. His lids.

lashes were dark and long and fine over his eyes, that had no

'To give you a chair—that—with the label on it,' he said, mind in them, only a dreadful kind of subject, inward con-pointing.

sciousness, glazed and dark. His dark brows and all his lines, The man looked at the object indicated. There was a curi-were finely drawn. He would be a dreadful, but wonderful ous hostility in male, outlawed understanding between the lover to a woman, so marvellously contributed. His legs would

two men.

be marvellously subtle and alive, under the shapeless, trou-

'What's she warnt to give it US for, guvnor,' he replied, in sers, he had some of the fineness and stillness and silkiness of a tone of free intimacy that insulted Ursula.

a dark-eyed, silent rat.

'Thought you'd like it—it's a pretty chair. We bought it Ursula had apprehended him with a fine FRISSON of and don't want it. No need for you to have it, don't be fright-attraction. The full-built woman was staring offensively. Again ened,' said Birkin, with a wry smile.

Ursula forgot him.

The man glanced up at him, half inimical, half recognising.

'Won't you have the chair?' she said.

'Why don't you want it for yourselves, if you've just bought The man looked at her with a sideways look of apprecia-it?' asked the woman coolly. 'Taint good enough for you, now tion, yet faroff, almost insolent. The woman drew herself up.

you've had a look at it. Frightened it's got something in it, There was a certain costermonger richness about her. She did eh?'

not know what Ursula was after, she was on her guard, hostile.

She was looking at Ursula, admiringly, but with some re-Birkin approached, smiling wickedly at seeing Ursula so non-sentment.

plussed and frightened.

'I'd never thought of that,' said Birkin. 'But no, the wood's

'What's the matter?' he said, smiling. His eyelids had too thin everywhere.'

dropped slightly, there was about him the same suggestive,

'You see,' said Ursula, her face luminous and pleased. 'WE

mocking secrecy that was in the bearing of the two city crea-are just going to get married, and we thought we'd buy things.

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Then we decided, just now, that we wouldn't have furniture, sicklily, turning away his head. She had got his manhood, but we'd go abroad.'

Lord, what did he care! He had a strange furtive pride and The full-built, slightly blowsy city girl looked at the fine slinking singleness.

face of the other woman, with appreciation. They appreciated

'Good luck to you,' said Birkin.

each other. The youth stood aside, his face expressionless and

'Same to you,' said the young woman. Then, rather tenta-timeless, the thin line of the black moustache drawn strangely tively: 'When's yours coming off, then?'

suggestive over his rather wide, closed mouth. He was impas-Birkin looked round at Ursula.

sive, abstract, like some dark suggestive presence, a gutter-

'It's for the lady to say,' he replied. 'We go to the registrar presence.

the moment she's ready.'

'It's all right to be some folks,' said the city girl, turning to Ursula laughed, covered with confusion and bewilderment.

her own young man. He did not look at her, but he smiled

'No 'urry,' said the young man, grinning suggestive.

with the lower part of his face, putting his head aside in an

'Oh, don't break your neck to get there,' said the young odd gesture of assent. His eyes were unchanging, glazed with woman. 'Slike when you're dead—you're long time married.'

darkness.

The young man turned aside as if this hit him.

'Cawsts something to change your mind,' he said, in an

'The longer the better, let us hope,' said Birkin.

incredibly low accent.

'That's it, guvnor,' said the young man admiringly. 'Enjoy

'Only ten shillings this time,' said Birkin.

it while it larsts—niver whip a dead donkey.'

The man looked up at him with a grimace of a smile, fur-

'Only when he's shamming dead,' said the young woman, tive, unsure.

looking at her young man with caressive tenderness of au-

'Cheap at 'arf a quid, guvnor,' he said. 'Not like getting thority.

divawced.'

'Aw, there's a difference,' he said satirically.

'We're not married yet,' said Birkin.

'What about the chair?' said Birkin.

'No, no more aren't we,' said the young woman loudly.

'Yes, all right,' said the woman.

'But we shall be, a Saturday.'

They trailed off to the dealer, the handsome but abject Again she looked at the young man with a determined, young fellow hanging a little aside.

protective look, at once overbearing and very gentle. He grinned

'That's it,' said Birkin. 'Will you take it with you, or have

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the address altered.'

Birkin.

'Oh, Fred can carry it. Make him do what he can for the

'Goo'-luck to you,' said the young man, glancing and avoid-dear old 'ome.'

ing Birkin's eyes, as he turned aside his head.

'Mike use of 'im,' said Fred, grimly humorous, as he took The two couples went asunder, Ursula clinging to Birkin's the chair from the dealer. His movements were graceful, yet arm. When they had gone some distance, she glanced back curiously abject, slinking.

and saw the young man going beside the full, easy young

"Ere's mother's cosy chair," he said. "Warnts a cushion." And woman. His trousers sank over his heels, he moved with a sort he stood it down on the market stones.

of slinking evasion, more crushed with odd selfconsciousness

'Don't you think it's pretty?' laughed Ursula.

now he had the slim old arm-chair to carry, his arm over the

'Oh, I do,' said the young woman.

back, the four fine, square tapering legs swaying perilously

"Ave a sit in it, you'll wish you'd kept it," said the young near the granite setts of the pavement. And yet he was some-man.

where indomitable and separate, like a quick, vital rat. He had Ursula promptly sat down in the middle of the market-a queer, subterranean beauty, repulsive too.

place.

'How strange they are!' said Ursula.

'Awfully comfortable,' she said. 'But rather hard. You try

'Children of men,' he said. 'They remind me of Jesus: "The it.' She invited the young man to a seat. But he turned un-meek shall inherit the earth."'

couthly, awkwardly aside, glancing up at her with quick bright

'But they aren't the meek,' said Ursula.

eyes, oddly suggestive, like a quick, live rat.

'Yes, I don't know why, but they are,' he replied.

'Don't spoil him,' said the young woman. 'He's not used to They waited for the tramcar. Ursula sat on top and looked arm-chairs, 'e isn't.

out on the town. The dusk was just dimming the hollows of The young man turned away, and said, with averted grin: crowded houses.

'Only warnts legs on 'is.'

'And are they going to inherit the earth?' she said.

The four parted. The young woman thanked them.

'Yes—they.'

'Thank you for the chair—it'll last till it gives way.'

'Then what are we going to do?' she asked. 'We're not like

'Keep it for an ornyment,' said the young man.

them—are we? We're not the meek?'

'Good afternoon—Good afternoon,' said Ursula and

'No. We've got to live in the chinks they leave us.'

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'How horrible!' cried Ursula. 'I don't want to live in chinks.'

'Neither do I. I want to be disinherited.'

'Don't worry,' he said. 'They are the children of men, they She clasped his fingers closely.

like market-places and street-corners best. That leaves plenty

'We won't care about ANYTHING,' she said.

of chinks.'

He sat still, and laughed.

'All the world,' she said.

'And we'll be married, and have done with them,' she added.

'Ah no—but some room.'

Again he laughed.

The tramcar mounted slowly up the hill, where the ugly

'It's one way of getting rid of everything,' she said, 'to get winter-grey masses of houses looked like a vision of hell that married.'

is cold and angular. They sat and looked. Away in the dis-

'And one way of accepting the whole world,' he added.

tance was an angry redness of sunset. It was all cold, somehow

'A whole other world, yes,' she said happily.

small, crowded, and like the end of the world.

'Perhaps there's Gerald—and Gudrun—' he said.

'I don't mind it even then,' said Ursula, looking at the re-

'If there is there is, you see,' she said. 'It's no good our pulsiveness of it all. 'It doesn't concern me.'

worrying. We can't really alter them, can we?'

'No more it does,' he replied, holding her hand. 'One needn't

'No,' he said. 'One has no right to try—not with the best see. One goes one's way. In my world it is sunny and spa-intentions in the world.'

cious—'

'Do you try to force them?' she asked.

'It is, my love, isn't it?' she cried, hugging near to him on

'Perhaps,' he said. 'Why should I want him to be free, if it the top of the tramcar, so that the other passengers stared at isn't his business?'

them.

She paused for a time.

'And we will wander about on the face of the earth,' he

'We can't MAKE him happy, anyhow,' she said. 'He'd have said, 'and we'll look at the world beyond just this bit.'

to be it of himself.'

There was a long silence. Her face was radiant like gold, as

'I know,' he said. 'But we want other people with us, don't she sat thinking.

we?'

'I don't want to inherit the earth,' she said. 'I don't want to

'Why should we?' she asked.

inherit anything.'

'I don't know,' he said uneasily. 'One has a hankering after He closed his hand over hers.

a sort of further fellowship.'

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'But why?' she insisted. 'Why should you hanker after

'Don't I?' he said. 'It's the problem I can't solve. I KNOW

other people? Why should you need them?'

I want a perfect and complete relationship with you: and we've This hit him right on the quick. His brows knitted.

nearly got it—we really have. But beyond that. DO I want a

'Does it end with just our two selves?' he asked, tense.

real, ultimate relationship with Gerald? Do I want a final,

'Yes—what more do you want? If anybody likes to come almost extra-human relationship with him—a relationship along, let them. But why must you run after them?'

in the ultimate of me and him—or don't I?'

His face was tense and unsatisfied.

She looked at him for a long time, with strange bright

'You see,' he said, 'I always imagine our being really happy eyes, but she did not answer.

with some few other people—a little freedom with people.'

She pondered for a moment.

'Yes, one does want that. But it must HAPPEN. You can't do anything for it with your will. You always seem to think you can FORCE the flowers to come out. People must love us because they love us—you can't MAKE them.'

'I know,' he said. 'But must one take no steps at all? Must one just go as if one were alone in the world—the only creature in the world?'

'You've got me,' she said. 'Why should you NEED others? Why must you force people to agree with you? Why can't you be single by yourself, as you are always saying? You try to bully Gerald—as you tried to bully Hermione. You must learn to be alone. And it's so horrid of you. You've got me. And yet you want to force other people to love you as well. You do try to bully them to love you. And even then, you don't want their love.'

His face was full of real perplexity.

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'Yes,' said Ursula. 'Why not?' Those two words, from her, always drove him mad. 'Everything is all right—we shall go to the registrar's office-'

There was a second's hush in the room, after Ursula's blithe vagueness.

'REALLY, Ursula!' said Gudrun.

'Might we ask why there has been all this secrecy?' demanded the mother, rather superbly.

'But there hasn't,' said Ursula. 'You knew.'

Chapter 27.

'Who knew?' now cried the father. 'Who knew? What do you mean by your

"you knew"?"

Flitting.

He was in one of his stupid rages, she instantly closed against him.

That evening Ursula returned home very bright-eyed and

'Of course you knew,' she said coolly. 'You knew we were wondrous—which irritated her people. Her father came home going to get married.'

at suppertime, tired after the evening class, and the long jour-There was a dangerous pause.

ney home. Gudrun was reading, the mother sat in silence.

'We knew you were going to get married, did we? Knew!

Suddenly Ursula said to the company at large, in a bright Why, does anybody know anything about you, you shifty voice, 'Rupert and I are going to be married tomorrow.'

bitch!'

Her father turned round, stiffly.

'Father!' cried Gudrun, flushing deep in violent remon-

'You what?' he said.

strance. Then, in a cold, but gentle voice, as if to remind her

'Tomorrow!' echoed Gudrun.

sister to be tractable: 'But isn't it a FEARFULLY sudden

'Indeed!' said the mother.

decision, Ursula?' she asked.

But Ursula only smiled wonderfully, and did not reply.

'No, not really,' replied Ursula, with the same maddening

'Married tomorrow!' cried her father harshly. 'What are cheerfulness. 'He's been WANTING me to agree for weeks—

you talking about.'

he's had the licence ready. Only I—I wasn't ready in myself.

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Now I am ready—is there anything to be disagreeable about?'

The mother and Gudrun stood back as if hypnotised.

'Certainly not,' said Gudrun, but in a tone of cold re-

'No,' stammered Ursula. Her father was very near to her.

proof. 'You are perfectly free to do as you like.'

'You only want to-'

"Ready in yourself"—YOURSELF, that's all that mat-She knew it was dangerous, and she stopped. He was gath-ters, isn't it! "I wasn't ready in

myself," he mimicked her phrase ered together, every muscle ready.

offensively. 'You and YOURSELF, you're of some importance,

'What?' he challenged.

aren't you?'

'Bully me,' she muttered, and even as her lips were mov-She drew herself up and set back her throat, her eyes shining, his hand had caught her smack at the side of the face and ing yellow and dangerous.

she was sent up against the door.

'I am to myself,' she said, wounded and mortified. 'I know

'Father!' cried Gudrun in a high voice, 'it is impossible!'

I am not to anybody else. You only wanted to BULLY me—

He stood unmoving. Ursula recovered, her hand was on you never cared for my happiness.'

the door handle. She slowly drew herself up. He seemed doubt-He was leaning forward watching her, his face intense like ful now.

a spark.

'It's true,' she declared, with brilliant tears in her eyes, her

'Ursula, what are you saying? Keep your tongue still,' cried head lifted up in defiance. 'What has your love meant, what her mother.

did it ever mean?—bullying, and denial-it did-'

Ursula swung round, and the lights in her eyes flashed.

He was advancing again with strange, tense movements,

'No, I won't,' she cried. 'I won't hold my tongue and be and clenched fist, and the face of a murderer. But swift as bullied. What does it matter which day I get married—what lightning she had flashed out of the door, and they heard her does it MATTER! It doesn't affect anybody but myself.'

running upstairs.

Her father was tense and gathered together like a cat about He stood for a moment looking at the door. Then, like a to spring.

defeated animal, he turned and went back to his seat by the

'Doesn't it?' he cried, coming nearer to her. She shrank away.

fire.

'No, how can it?' she replied, shrinking but stubborn.

Gudrun was very white. Out of the intense silence, the

'It doesn't matter to ME then, what you do—what be-mother's voice was heard saying, cold and angry: comes of you?' he cried, in a strange voice like a cry.

'Well, you shouldn't take so much notice of her.'

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Again the silence fell, each followed a separate set of emo-with the valise in her hand, and marks of tears on her face.

tions and thoughts.

She was one who wept without showing many traces, like a Suddenly the door opened again: Ursula, dressed in hat child.

and furs, with a small valise in her hand:

'Do I look a sight?' she said, shrinking.

'Good-bye!' she said, in her maddening, bright, almost

'No—why? Come in,' he took the bag from her hand and mocking tone. 'I'm going.'

they went into the study.

And in the next instant the door was closed, they heard There—immediately, her lips began to tremble like those the outer door, then her quick steps down the garden path, of a child that remembers again, and the tears came rushing then the gate banged, and her light footfall was gone. There up.

was a silence like death in the house.

'What's the matter?' he asked, taking her in his arms. She Ursula went straight to the station, hastening heedlessly sobbed violently on his shoulder, whilst he held her still, wait-on winged feet. There was no train, she must walk on to the ing.

junction. As she went through the darkness, she began to cry,

'What's the matter?' he said again, when she was quieter.

and she wept bitterly, with a dumb, heart-broken, child's an-But she only pressed her face further into his shoulder, in guish, all the way on the road, and in the train. Time passed pain, like a child that cannot tell.

unheeded and unknown, she did not know where she was,

'What is it, then?' he asked. Suddenly she broke away, nor what was taking place. Only she wept from fathomless wiped her eyes, regained her composure, and went and sat in depths of hopeless, hopeless grief, the terrible grief of a child, a chair.

that knows no extenuation.

'Father hit me,' she announced, sitting bunched up, rather Yet her voice had the same defensive brightness as she spoke like a ruffled bird, her eyes very bright.

to Birkin's landlady at the door.

'What for?' he said.

'Good evening! Is Mr Birkin in? Can I see him?'

She looked away, and would not answer. There was a piti-

'Yes, he's in. He's in his study.'

ful redness about her sensitive nostrils, and her quivering lips.

Ursula slipped past the woman. His door opened. He had

'Why?' he repeated, in his strange, soft, penetrating voice.

heard her voice.

She looked round at him, rather defiantly.

'Hello!' he exclaimed in surprise, seeing her standing there

'Because I said I was going to be married tomorrow, and

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he bullied me.'

He went over to her and kissed her fine, fragile hair, touch-

'Why did he bully you?'

ing her wet cheeks gently.

Her mouth dropped again, she remembered the scene once

'Don't cry,' he repeated, 'don't cry any more.'

more, the tears came up.

He held her head close against him, very close and quiet.

'Because I said he didn't care—and he doesn't, it's only his At last she was still. Then she looked up, her eyes wide domineeringness that's hurt—' she said, her mouth pulled and frightened.

awry by her weeping, all the time she spoke, so that he almost

'Don't you want me?' she asked.

smiled, it seemed so childish. Yet it was not childish, it was a

'Want you?' His darkened, steady eyes puzzled her and mortal conflict, a

deep wound.

did not give her play.

'It isn't quite true,' he said. 'And even so, you shouldn't

'Do you wish I hadn't come?' she asked, anxious now again SAY it.'

for fear she might be out of place.

'It IS true—it IS true,' she wept, 'and I won't be bullied

'No,' he said. 'I wish there hadn't been the violence—so by his pretending it's love—when it ISN'T—he doesn't care, much ugliness—but perhaps it was inevitable.'

how can he—no, he can't-'

She watched him in silence. He seemed deadened.

He sat in silence. She moved him beyond himself.

'But where shall I stay?' she asked, feeling humiliated.

'Then you shouldn't rouse him, if he can't,' replied Birkin He thought for a moment.

quietly.

'Here, with me,' he said. 'We're married as much today as

'And I HAVE loved him, I have,' she wept. 'I've loved him we shall be tomorrow.'

always, and he's always done this to me, he has—'

'But—'

'It's been a love of opposition, then,' he said. 'Never mind—

'I'll tell Mrs Varley,' he said. 'Never mind now.'

it will be all right. It's nothing desperate.'

He sat looking at her. She could feel his darkened steady

'Yes,' she wept, 'it is, it is.'

eyes looking at her all the time. It made her a little bit fright-

'Why?'

ened. She pushed her hair off her forehead nervously.

'I shall never see him again—'

'Do I look ugly?' she said.

'Not immediately. Don't cry, you had to break with him, And she blew her nose again.

it had to be—don't cry.'

A small smile came round his eyes.

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'No,' he said, 'fortunately.'

dead, who was so near to being gone with the rest of his race And he went across to her, and gathered her like a belong-down the slope of mechanical death, could never be undering in his arms. She was so tenderly beautiful, he could not stood by her. He worshipped her as age worships youth, he bear to see her, he could only bear to hide her against himself.

gloried in her, because, in his one grain of faith, he was young Now; washed all clean by her tears, she was new and frail like as she, he was her proper mate. This marriage with her was his a flower just unfolded, a flower so new, so tender, so made resurrection and his life.

perfect by inner light, that he could not bear to look at her, he All this she could not know. She wanted to be made much must hide her against himself, cover his eyes against her. She of, to be adored. There were infinite distances of silence be-had the perfect candour of creation, something translucent tween them. How could he tell her of the immanence of her and simple, like a radiant, shining flower that moment un-beauty, that was not form, or weight, or colour, but some-folded in primal blessedness. She was so new, so wonder-clear, thing like a strange, golden light! How could he know him-so undimmed. And he was so old, so steeped in heavy memo-self what her beauty lay in, for him. He said 'Your nose is ries. Her soul was new, undefined and glimmering with the beautiful, your chin is adorable.' But it sounded like lies, and unseen. And his soul was dark and gloomy, it had only one she was disappointed, hurt. Even when he said, whispering grain of living hope, like a grain of mustard seed. But this one with truth, 'I love you, I love you,' it was not the real truth. It living grain in him matched the perfect youth in her.

was something beyond love, such a gladness of having sur-

'I love you,' he whispered as he kissed her, and trembled passed oneself, of having transcended the old existence. How with pure hope, like a man who is born again to a wonderful, could he say "I" when he was something new and unknown, lively hope far exceeding the bounds of death.

not himself at all? This I, this old formula of the age, was a She could not

know how much it meant to him, how much dead letter.

he meant by the few words. Almost childish, she wanted proof, In the new, superfine bliss, a peace superseding knowl-and statement, even overstatement, for everything seemed edge, there was no I and you, there was only the third, still uncertain, unfixed to her.

unrealised wonder, the wonder of existing not as oneself, but But the passion of gratitude with which he received her in a consummation of my being and of her being in a new into his soul, the extreme, unthinkable gladness of knowing one, a new, paradisal unit regained from the duality. Nor can himself living and fit to unite with her, he, who was so nearly I say 'I love you,' when I have ceased to be, and you have **Contents**



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ceased to be: we are both caught up and transcended into a

'Oh yes.'

new oneness where everything is silent, because there is noth-He was very quiet, as if it were something not to be talked ing to answer, all is perfect and at one. Speech travels between about by him. He seemed sad.

the separate parts. But in the perfect One there is perfect She was very sensitive to suggestion. She asked the ques-silence of bliss.

tion he wanted her to ask.

They were married by law on the next day, and she did as

'Why don't you be happy as well?' she said. 'You could be he bade her, she wrote to her father and mother. Her mother just the same.'

replied, not her father.

He paused a moment.

She did not go back to school. She stayed with Birkin in

'With Gudrun?' he asked.

his rooms, or at the Mill, moving with him as he moved. But

'Yes!' she cried, her eyes glowing. But there was a strange she did not see anybody, save Gudrun and Gerald. She was all tension, an emphasis, as if they were asserting their wishes, strange and wondering as yet, but relieved as by dawn.

against the truth.

Gerald sat talking to her one afternoon in the warm study

'You think Gudrun would have me, and we should be down at the Mill. Rupert had not yet come home.

happy?' he said.

'You are happy?' Gerald asked her, with a smile.

'Yes, I'm SURE!' she cried.

'Very happy!' she cried, shrinking a little in her bright-Her eyes were round with delight. Yet underneath she was ness.

constrained, she knew her own insistence.

'Yes, one can see it.'

'Oh, I'm SO glad,' she added.

'Can one?' cried Ursula in surprise.

He smiled.

He looked up at her with a communicative smile.

'What makes you glad?' he said.

'Oh yes, plainly.'

'For HER sake,' she replied. 'I'm sure you'd—you're the She was pleased. She meditated a moment.

right man for her.'

'And can you see that Rupert is happy as well?'

'You are?' he said. 'And do you think she would agree with He lowered his eyelids, and looked aside.

you?'

'Oh yes,' he said.

'Oh yes!' she exclaimed hastily. Then, upon reconsidera-

'Really!'

tion, very uneasy: 'Though Gudrun isn't so very simple, is

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she? One doesn't know her in five minutes, does one? She's

'What?'

not like me in that.' She laughed at him with her strange,

'How things went. I think it is best to take the honey-open, dazzled face.

moon before the wedding—don't you?'

'You think she's not much like you?' Gerald asked.

She was pleased with this MOT. He laughed.

She knitted her brows.

'In certain cases,' he said. 'I'd rather it were so in my own

'Oh, in many ways she is. But I never know what she will case.'

do when anything new comes.'

'Would you!' exclaimed Ursula. Then doubtingly, 'Yes,

'You don't?' said Gerald. He was silent for some moments.

perhaps you're right. One should please oneself.'

Then he moved tentatively. 'I was going to ask her, in any Birkin came in a little later, and Ursula told him what had case, to go away with me at Christmas,' he said, in a very been said.

small, cautious voice.

'Gudrun!' exclaimed Birkin. 'She's a born mistress, just as

'Go away with you? For a time, you mean?'

Gerald is a born lover—AMANT EN TITRE. If as some-

'As long as she likes,' he said, with a deprecating move-body says all women are either wives or mistresses, then Gudrun ment.

is a mistress.'

They were both silent for some minutes.

'And all men either lovers or husbands,' cried Ursula. 'But

'Of course,' said Ursula at last, 'she MIGHT just be will-why not both?'

ing to rush into marriage. You can see.'

'The one excludes the other,' he laughed.

'Yes,' smiled Gerald. 'I can see. But in case she won't—do

'Then I want a lover,' cried Ursula.

you think she would go abroad with me for a few days—or

'No you don't,' he said.

for a fortnight?'

'But I do,' she wailed.

'Oh yes,' said Ursula. 'I'd ask her.'

He kissed her, and laughed.

'Do you think we might all go together?'

It was two days after this that Ursula was to go to fetch

'All of us?' Again Ursula's face lighted up. 'It would be her things from the house in Beldover. The removal had taken rather fun, don't you think?'

place, the family had gone. Gudrun had rooms in Willey

'Great fun,' he said.

Green.

'And then you could see,' said Ursula.

Ursula had not seen her parents since her marriage. She

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wept over the rupture, yet what was the good of making it up!

'I know,' cried Gudrun. 'It is too appalling. What must Good or not good, she could not go to them. So her things we be like, if we are the contents of THIS!'

had been left behind and she and Gudrun were to walk over

'Vile!' said Ursula. 'It really is.'

for them, in the afternoon.

And she recognised half-burnt covers of 'Vogue'—half-It was a wintry afternoon, with red in the sky, when they burnt representations of women in gowns—lying under the arrived at the house. The windows were dark and blank, al-grate.

ready the place was frightening. A stark, void entrance-hall They went to the drawing-room. Another piece of shut-struck a chill to the hearts of the girls.

in air; without weight or substance, only a sense of intolerable

'I don't believe I dare have come in alone,' said Ursula. 'It papery imprisonment in nothingness. The kitchen did look frightens me.'

more substantial, because of the red-tiled floor and the stove,

'Ursula!' cried Gudrun. 'Isn't it amazing! Can you believe but it was cold and horrid.

you lived in this place and never felt it? How I lived here a The two girls tramped hollowly up the bare stairs. Every day without dying of terror, I cannot conceive!'

sound reechoed under their hearts. They tramped down the They looked in the big diningroom. It was a good-sized bare corridor. Against the wall of Ursula's bedroom were her room, but now a cell would have been lovelier. The large bay things—a trunk, a work-basket, some books, loose coats, a windows were naked, the floor was stripped, and a border of hat-box, standing desolate in the universal emptiness of the dark polish went round the tract of pale boarding.

dusk.

In the faded wallpaper were dark patches where furniture

'A cheerful sight, aren't they?' said Ursula, looking down at had stood, where pictures had hung. The sense of walls, dry, her forsaken possessions.

thin, flimsy-seeming walls, and a flimsy flooring, pale with

'Very cheerful,' said Gudrun.

its artificial black edges, was neutralising to the mind. Every-The two girls set to, carrying everything down to the front thing was null to the senses, there was enclosure without sub-door. Again and again they made the hollow, reechoing tran-stance, for the walls were dry and papery. Where were they sit. The whole place seemed to resound about them with a standing, on earth, or suspended in some cardboard box? In noise of hollow, empty futility. In the distance the empty, the hearth was burnt paper, and scraps of half-burnt paper.

invisible rooms sent forth a vibration almost of obscenity. They

'Imagine that we passed our days here!' said Ursula.

almost fled with the last articles, into the out-of-door.

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But it was cold. They were waiting for Birkin, who was Ursula, it is quite different. You will be out of it all, with coming with the car. They went indoors again, and upstairs to Birkin. He's a special case. But with the ordinary man, who their parents' front bedroom, whose windows looked down has his life fixed in one place, marriage is just impossible.

on the road, and across the country at the black-barred sun-There may be, and

there ARE, thousands of women who set, black and red barred, without light.

want it, and could conceive of nothing else. But the very They sat down in the window-seat, to wait. Both girls thought of it sends me MAD. One must be free, above all, were looking over the room. It was void, with a meaningless-one must be free. One may forfeit everything else, but one ness that was almost dreadful.

must be free—one must not become 7, Pinchbeck Street—or

'Really,' said Ursula, 'this room COULDN'T be sacred, Somerset Drive—or Shortlands. No man will be sufficient to could it?'

make that good—no man! To marry, one must have a free Gudrun looked over it with slow eyes.

lance, or nothing, a comrade-in-arms, a Glckstritter. A man

'Impossible,' she replied.

with a position in the social world—well, it is just impossible,

'When I think of their lives—father's and mother's, their impossible!'

love, and their marriage, and all of us children, and our bring-

'What a lovely word—a Glckstritter!' said Ursula. 'So much ing-up—would you have such a life, Prune?'

nicer than a soldier of fortune.'

'I wouldn't, Ursula.'

'Yes, isn't it?' said Gudrun. 'I'd tilt the world with a

'It all seems so NOTHING—their two lives—there's no Glcksritter. But a home, an establishment! Ursula, what would meaning in it. Really, if they had NOT met, and NOT mar-it mean?—think!'

ried, and not lived together—it wouldn't have mattered, would

'I know,' said Ursula. 'We've had one home—that's enough it?'

for me.'

'Of course—you can't tell,' said Gudrun.

'Quite enough,' said Gudrun.

'No. But if I thought my life was going to be like it—

'The little grey home in the west,' quoted Ursula ironi-Prune,' she caught Gudrun's arm, 'I should run.'

cally.

Gudrun was silent for a few moments.

'Doesn't it sound grey, too,' said Gudrun grimly.

'As a matter of fact, one cannot contemplate the ordinary They were interrupted by the sound of the car. There was life—one cannot contemplate it,' replied Gudrun. 'With you, Birkin. Ursula was surprised that she felt so lit up, that she **Contents**



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became suddenly so free from the problems of grey homes in

'Quite!' said Gudrun.

the west.

'Why DOES every woman think her aim in life is to have They heard his heels click on the hall pavement below.

a hubby and a little grey home in the west? Why is this the

'Hello!' he called, his voice echoing alive through the house.

goal of life? Why should it be?' said Ursula.

Ursula smiled to herself. HE was frightened of the place too.

'Il faut avoir le respect de ses btises,' said Birkin.

'Hello! Here we are,' she called downstairs. And they heard

'But you needn't have the respect for the BETISE before him quickly running up.

you've committed it,' laughed Ursula.

'This is a ghostly situation,' he said.

'Ah then, des betises du papa?'

'These houses don't have ghosts—they've never had any

'Et de la maman,' added Gudrun satirically.

personality, and only a place with personality can have a ghost,'

'Et des voisins,' said Ursula.

said Gudrun.

They all laughed, and rose. It was getting dark. They car-

'I suppose so. Are you both weeping over the past?'

ried the things to the car. Gudrun locked the door of the

'We are,' said Gudrun, grimly.

empty house. Birkin had lighted the lamps of the automo-Ursula laughed.

bile. It all seemed very happy, as if they were setting out.

'Not weeping that it's gone, but weeping that it ever WAS,'

'Do you mind stopping at Coulsons. I have to leave the she said.

key there,' said Gudrun.

'Oh,' he replied, relieved.

'Right,' said Birkin, and they moved off.

He sat down for a moment. There was something in his They stopped in the main street. The shops were just presence, Ursula thought, lambent and alive. It made even lighted, the last miners were passing home along the cause-the impertinent structure of this null house disappear.

ways, half-visible shadows in their grey pit-dirt, moving

'Gudrun says she could not bear to be married and put through the blue air. But their feet rang harshly in manifold into a house,' said Ursula meaningful—they knew this resound, along the pavement.

ferred to Gerald.

How pleased Gudrun was to come out of the shop, and He was silent for some moments.

enter the car, and be borne swiftly away into the downhill of

'Well,' he said, 'if you know beforehand you couldn't stand palpable dusk,

with Ursula and Birkin! What an adventure it, you're safe.'

life seemed at this moment! How deeply, how suddenly she

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envied Ursula! Life for her was so quick, and an open door—

She wanted very much to go on with Ursula and Birkin.

so reckless as if not only this world, but the world that was That seemed like life indeed to her. Yet a certain perver-gone and the world to come were nothing to her. Ah, if she sity would not let her.

could be JUST LIKE THAT, it would be perfect.

'Do come—yes, it would be so nice,' pleaded Ursula.

For always, except in her moments of excitement, she felt

'I'm awfully sorry—I should love to—but I can't—really—

a want within herself. She was unsure. She had felt that now,

at last, in Gerald's strong and violent love, she was living fully She

descended from the car in trembling haste.

and finally. But when she compared herself with Ursula, al-

'Can't you really!' came Ursula's regretful voice.

ready her soul was jealous, unsatisfied. She was not satisfied—

'No, really I can't,' responded Gudrun's pathetic, chagrined she was never to be satisfied.

words out of the dusk.

What was she short of now? It was marriage—it was the

'All right, are you?' called Birkin.

wonderful stability of marriage. She did want it, let her say

'Quite!' said Gudrun. 'Good-night!'

what she might. She had been lying. The old idea of marriage

'Good-night,' they called.

was right even now—marriage and the home. Yet her mouth

'Come whenever you like, we shall be glad,' called Birkin.

gave a little grimace at the words. She thought of Gerald and

'Thank you very much,' called Gudrun, in the strange, Shortlands—marriage and the home! Ah well, let it rest! He twanging voice of lonely chagrin that was very puzzling to meant a great deal to her—but—! Perhaps it was not in her to him. She turned away to her cottage gate, and they drove on.

marry. She was one of life's outcasts, one of the drifting lives But immediately she stood to watch them, as the car ran vague that have no root. No, no it could not be so. She suddenly into the distance. And as she went up

the path to her strange conjured up a rosy room, with herself in a beautiful gown, house, her heart was full of incomprehensible bitterness.

and a handsome man in evening dress who held her in his In her parlour was a long-case clock, and inserted into its arms in the firelight, and kissed her. This picture she entitled dial was a ruddy, round, slant-eyed, joyous-painted face, that 'Home.' It would have done for the Royal Academy.

wagged over with the most ridiculous ogle when the clock

'Come with us to tea—DO,' said Ursula, as they ran nearer ticked, and back again with the same absurd glad-eye at the to the cottage of Willey Green.

next tick. All the time the absurd smooth, brown-ruddy face

'Thanks awfully—but I MUST go in—' said Gudrun.

gave her an obtrusive 'glad-eye.' She stood for minutes, watch-

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ing it, till a sort of maddened disgust overcame her, and she ment, as if taken aback, and not knowing what to say.

laughed at herself hollowly. And still it rocked, and gave her

'But don't you thing,' she said at last, 'it is AMAZINGLY

the glad-eye from one side, then from the other, from one COOL!' side, then from the other. Ah, how unhappy she was! In the Ursula laughed. midst of her most active happiness, ah, how unhappy she was!

'I like him for it,' she said.

She glanced at the table. Gooseberry jam, and the same home-Gudrun was silent. It was evident that, whilst she was al-made cake with too much soda in it! Still, gooseberry jam was most mortified by Gerald's taking the liberty of making such good, and one so rarely got it.

a suggestion to Birkin, yet the idea itself attracted her strongly.

All the evening she wanted to go to the Mill. But she

'There's rather lovely simplicity about Gerald, I think,'

coldly refused to allow herself. She went the next afternoon said Ursula, 'so defiant, somehow! Oh, I think he's VERY

instead. She was happy to find Ursula alone. It was a lovely, lovable.'

intimate secluded atmosphere. They talked endlessly and de-Gudrun did not reply for some moments. She had still to lightedly. 'Aren't you FEARFULLY happy here?' said Gudrun get over the feeling of insult at the liberty taken with her to her sister glancing at her own bright eyes in the mirror. She freedom.

always envied, almost with resentment, the strange positive

'What did Rupert say—do you know?' she asked.

fullness that subsisted in the atmosphere around Ursula and

'He said it would be most awfully jolly,' said Ursula.

Birkin.

Again Gudrun looked down, and was silent.

How really beautifully this room is done,' she said aloud.

'Don't you think it would?' said Ursula, tentatively. She

'This hard plaited matting—what a lovely colour it is, the was never quite sure how many defences Gudrun was having colour of cool light!'

round herself.

And it seemed to her perfect.

Gudrun raised her face with difficulty and held it averted.

'Ursula,' she said at length, in a voice of question and de-

'I think it MIGHT be awfully jolly, as you say,' she re-tachment, 'did you know that Gerald Crich had suggested plied. 'But don't you think it was an unpardonable liberty to our going away all together at Christmas?'

take—to talk of such things to Rupert—who after all—you

'Yes, he's spoken to Rupert.'

see what I mean, Ursula—they might have been two men A deep flush dyed Gudrun's cheek. She was silent a mo-arranging an outing with some little TYPE they'd picked up.

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Oh, I think it's unforgivable, quite!' She used the French word Gudrun's mouth was still closed, sullen and ugly. She

'TYPE.'

opened it at length.

Her eyes flashed, her soft face was flushed and sullen.

'Do you know where he proposes to go?' she asked.

Ursula looked on, rather frightened, frightened most of all

'Yes—to the Tyrol, where he used to go when he was in because she thought Gudrun seemed rather common, really Germany—a lovely place where students go, small and rough like a little TYPE. But she had not the courage quite to think and lovely, for winter sport!'

this—not right out.

Through Gudrun's mind went the angry thought—'they

'Oh no,' she cried, stammering. 'Oh no—not at all like know everything.'

that—oh no! No, I think it's rather beautiful, the friendship

'Yes,' she said aloud, 'about forty kilometres from between Rupert and Gerald. They just are simple—they say Innsbruck, isn't it?'

anything to each other, like brothers.'

'I don't know exactly where—but it would be lovely, don't Gudrun flushed deeper. She could not BEAR it that you think, high in the perfect snow—?'

Gerald gave her away—even to Birkin.

'Very lovely!' said Gudrun, sarcastically.

'But do you think even brothers have any right to exchange Ursula was put out.

confidences of that sort?' she asked, with deep anger.

'Of course,' she said, 'I think Gerald spoke to Rupert so

'Oh yes,' said Ursula. 'There's never anything said that isn't that it shouldn't seem like an outing with a TYPE—'

perfectly straightforward. No, the thing that's amazed me

'I know, of course,' said Gudrun, 'that he quite commonly most in Gerald—how perfectly simple and direct he can be!

does take up with that sort.'

And you know, it takes rather a big man. Most of them MUST

'Does he!' said Ursula. 'Why how do you know?'

be indirect, they are such cowards.'

'I know of a model in Chelsea,' said Gudrun coldly. Now But Gudrun was still silent with anger. She wanted the Ursula was silent. 'Well,' she said at last, with a doubtful laugh, absolute secrecy kept, with regard to her movements.

'I hope he has a good time with her.' At which Gudrun looked

'Won't you go?' said Ursula. 'Do, we might all be so happy!

more glum.

There is something I LOVE about Gerald—he's MUCH

more lovable than I thought him. He's free, Gudrun, he really is.'

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she HAD to return to this small, slow, central whirlpool of disintegration and dissolution: just give it a look.

She sat with Gerald drinking some sweetish liqueur, and staring with black, sullen looks at the various groups of people at the tables. She would greet nobody, but young men nodded to her frequently, with a kind of sneering familiarity. She cut them all. And it gave her pleasure to sit there, cheeks flushed, eyes black and sullen, seeing them all objectively, as put away from her, like creatures in some menagerie of apish Chapter 28.

degraded souls. God, what a foul crew they were! Her blood beat black and thick in her veins with rage and loathing. Yet *Gudrun in the Pompadour*.

she must sit and watch, watch. One or two people came to speak to her. From every side of the Cafe, eyes turned half Christmas drew near, all four prepared for flight. Birkin furtively, half jeeringly at her, men looking over their shoul-and Ursula were busy packing their few personal things, making ders, women under their hats.

them ready to be sent off, to whatever country and whatever The old crowd was there, Carlyon in his corner with his place they might choose at last. Gudrun was very much ex-pupils and his girl, Halliday and Libidnikov and

the Pussum—cited. She loved to be on the wing.

they were all there. Gudrun watched Gerald. She watched his She and Gerald, being ready first, set off via London and eyes linger a moment on Halliday, on Halliday's party. These Paris to Innsbruck, where they would meet Ursula and Birkin.

last were on the look-out—they nodded to him, he nodded In London they stayed one night. They went to the music-again. They giggled and whispered among themselves. Gerald hall, and afterwards to the Pompadour Cafe.

watched them with the steady twinkle in his eyes. They were Gudrun hated the Cafe, yet she always went back to it, as urging the Pussum to something.

did most of the artists of her acquaintance. She loathed its She at last rose. She was wearing a curious dress of dark atmosphere of petty vice and petty jealousy and petty art. Yet silk splashed and spattered with different colours, a curious she always called in again, when she was in town. It was as if motley effect. She was thinner, her eyes were perhaps hotter, **Contents**



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more disintegrated. Otherwise she was just the same. Gerald girl, as she stood near Gerald.

watched her with the same steady twinkle in his eyes as she

'Are you staying in town long?' she asked.

came across. She held out her thin brown hand to him.

'Tonight only.'

'How are you?' she said.

'Oh, only tonight. Are you coming over to speak to Julius?'

He shook hands with her, but remained seated, and let her

'Not tonight.'

stand near him, against the table. She nodded blackly to

'Oh very well. I'll tell him then.' Then came her touch of Gudrun, whom she did not know to speak to, but well enough diablerie. 'You're looking awf 'lly fit.'

by sight and reputation.

'Yes—I feel it.' Gerald was quite calm and easy, a spark of

'I am very well,' said Gerald. 'And you?'

satiric amusement in his eye.

'Oh I'm all wight. What about Wupert?'

'Are you having a good time?'

'Rupert? He's very well, too.'

This was a direct blow for Gudrun, spoken in a level, tone-

'Yes, I don't mean that. What about him being married?'

less voice of callous ease.

'Oh—yes, he is married.'

'Yes,' he replied, quite colourlessly.

The Pussum's eyes had a hot flash.

'I'm awf 'lly sorry you aren't coming round to the flat. You

'Oh, he's weally bwought it off then, has he? When was aren't very faithful to your fwiends.'

he married?'

'Not very,' he said.

'A week or two ago.'

She nodded them both 'Good-night', and went back slowly

'Weally! He's never written.'

to her own set. Gudrun watched her curious walk, stiff and

'No.'

jerking at the loins. They heard her level, toneless voice dis-

'No. Don't you think it's too bad?'

tinctly.

This last was in a tone of challenge. The Pussum let it be

'He won't come over;—he is otherwise engaged,' it said.

known by her tone, that she was aware of Gudrun's listening.

There was more laughter and lowered voices and mockery at

'I suppose he didn't feel like it,' replied Gerald.

the table.

'But why didn't he?' pursued the Pussum.

'Is she a friend of yours?' said Gudrun, looking calmly at This was received in silence. There was an ugly, mocking Gerald.

persistence in the small, beautiful figure of the short-haired

'I've stayed at Halliday's flat with Birkin,' he said, meet-

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ing her slow, calm eyes. And she knew that the Pussum was it aloud. I'll read you the choice bits,—hic! Oh dear! Do you one of his mistresses—and he knew she knew.

think if I drink water it would take off this hiccup? HIC!

She looked round, and called for the waiter. She wanted Oh, I feel perfectly helpless.'

an iced cocktail, of all things. This amused Gerald—he won-

'Isn't that the letter about uniting the dark and the light—

dered what was up.

and the Flux of Corruption?' asked Maxim, in his precise, The Halliday party was tipsy, and malicious. They were quick voice.

talking out loudly about Birkin, ridiculing him on every point,

'I believe so,' said the Pussum.

particularly on his marriage.

'Oh is it? I'd forgotten—HIC!—it was that one,' Halliday

'Oh, DON'T make me think of Birkin,' Halliday was said, opening the letter. 'HIC! Oh yes. How perfectly splen-squealing. 'He makes me perfectly sick. He is as bad as Jesus.

did! This is one of the best. "There is a phase in every race—

"Lord, WHAT must I do to be saved!"

"' he read in the sing-song, slow, distinct voice of a clergyman He giggled to himself tipsily.

reading the Scriptures, "When the desire for destruction over-

'Do you remember,' came the quick voice of the Russian, comes every other desire. In the individual, this desire is ulti-

'the letters he used to send. "Desire is holy-"'

mately a desire for destruction in the self "—HIC!—' he paused

'Oh yes!' cried Halliday. 'Oh, how perfectly splendid. Why, and looked up.

I've got one in my pocket. I'm sure I have.'

'I hope he's going ahead with the destruction of himself,'

He took out various papers from his pocket book.

said the quick voice of the Russian. Halliday giggled, and

'I'm sure I've—HIC! OH DEAR!—got one.'

lolled his head back, vaguely.

Gerald and Gudrun were watching absorbedly.

'There's not much to destroy in him,' said the Pussum.

'Oh yes, how perfectly—HIC!—splendid! Don't make me

'He's so thin already, there's only a fag-end to start on.'

laugh, Pussum, it gives me the hiccup. Hic!—' They all giggled.

'Oh, isn't it beautiful! I love reading it! I believe it has

'What did he say in that one?' the Pussum asked, leaning cured my hiccup!' squealed Halliday. 'Do let me go on. "It is forward, her dark, soft hair falling and swinging against her a desire for the reduction process in oneself, a reducing back face. There was something curiously indecent, obscene, about to the origin, a return along the Flux of Corruption, to the her small, longish, dark skull, particularly when the ears showed.

original rudimentary conditions of being—!" Oh, but I DO

'Wait—oh do wait! NO-O, I won't give it to you, I'll read think it is wonderful. It almost supersedes the Bible-'

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'Yes—Flux of Corruption,' said the Russian, 'I remember

'I think it's awful cheek to write like that,' said the Pussum.

that phrase.'

'Yes—yes, so do I,' said the Russian. 'He is a megaloma-

'Oh, he was always talking about Corruption,' said the niac, of course, it is a form of religious mania. He thinks he is Pussum. 'He must be corrupt himself, to have it so much on the Saviour of man—go on reading.'

his mind.'

'Surely,' Halliday intoned, "surely goodness and mercy hath

'Exactly!' said the Russian.

followed me all the days of my life—"' he broke off and giggled.

'Do let me go on! Oh, this is a perfectly wonderful piece!

Then he began again, intoning like a clergyman. "Surely there But do listen to this. "And in the great retrogression, the re-will come an end in us to this desire—for the constant going ducing back of the created body of life, we get knowledge, apart,—this passion for putting asunder—everything—our-and beyond knowledge, the phosphorescent ecstasy of acute selves, reducing ourselves part from part—reacting in inti-sensation." Oh, I do think these phrases are too absurdly won-macy only for destruction,—using sex as a great reducing derful. Oh but don't you think they ARE—they're nearly as agent, reducing the two great elements of male and female good as Jesus. "And if, Julius, you want this ecstasy of reduc-from their highly complex unity—reducing the old ideas, tion with the Pussum, you must go on till it is fulfilled. But going back to the savages for our sensations,—always seeking surely there is in you also, somewhere, the living desire for to LOSE ourselves in some ultimate black sensation, mind-positive creation, relationships in ultimate faith, when all this less and infinite—burning only with destructive fires, raging process of active corruption, with all its flowers of mud, is on with the hope of being burnt out utterly—"

transcended, and more or less finished—" I do wonder what

'I want to go,' said Gudrun to Gerald, as she signalled the the flowers of mud are. Pussum, you are a flower of mud.'

waiter. Her eyes were flashing, her cheeks were flushed. The

'Thank you—and what are you?'

strange effect of Birkin's letter read aloud in a perfect clerical

'Oh, I'm another, surely, according to this letter! We're all sing-song, clear and resonant, phrase by phrase, made the blood flowers of mud—FLEURS—HIC! DU MAL! It's perfectly mount into her head as if she were mad.

wonderful, Birkin harrowing Hell—harrowing the Pompa-She rose, whilst Gerald was paying the bill, and walked dour—HIC!'

over to Halliday's table. They all glanced up at her.

'Go on—go on,' said Maxim. 'What comes next? It's re-

'Excuse me,' she said. 'Is that a genuine letter you are readally very interesting.'

ing?'

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'Oh yes,' said Halliday. 'Quite genuine.'

goes—go and make him give it up.'

'May I see?'

Gudrun stood at the door of the taxi, which the man held Smiling foolishly he handed it to her, as if hypnotised.

open for her.

'Thank you,' she said.

'To the hotel?' she asked, as Gerald came out, hurriedly.

And she turned and walked out of the Cafe with the let-

'Where you like,' he answered.

ter, all down the brilliant room, between the tables, in her

'Right!' she said. Then to the driver, 'Wagstaff 's—Barton measured fashion. It was some moments before anybody Street.'

realised what was happening.

The driver bowed his head, and put down the flag.

From Halliday's table came half articulate cries, then some-Gudrun entered the taxi, with the deliberate cold move-body booed, then all the far end of the place began booing ment of a woman who is well-dressed and contemptuous in after Gudrun's retreating form. She was fashionably dressed her soul. Yet she was frozen with overwrought feelings. Gerald in blackish-green and silver, her hat was brilliant green, like followed her.

the sheen on an insect, but the brim was soft dark green, a

'You've forgotten the man,' she said cooly, with a slight falling edge with fine silver, her coat was dark green, lustrous, nod of her hat. Gerald gave the porter a shilling. The man with a high collar of grey fur, and great fur cuffs, the edge of saluted. They were in motion.

her dress showed silver and black velvet, her stockings and

'What was all the row about?' asked Gerald, in wondering shoes were silver grey. She moved with slow, fashionable in-excitement.

difference to the door. The porter opened obsequiously for

'I walked away with Birkin's letter,' she said, and he saw her, and, at her nod, hurried to the edge of the pavement and the crushed paper in her hand.

whistled for a taxi. The two lights of a vehicle almost imme-His eyes glittered with satisfaction.

diately curved round towards her, like two eyes.

'Ah!' he said. 'Splendid! A set of jackasses!'

Gerald had followed in wonder, amid all the booing, not

'I could have KILLED them!' she cried in passion.

having caught her misdeed. He heard the Pussum's voice say-

'DOGS!—they are dogs! Why is Rupert such a FOOL as to ing:

write such letters to them? Why does he give himself away to

'Go and get it back from her. I never heard of such a thing!

such canaille? It's a thing that CANNOT BE BORNE.'

Go and get it back from her. Tell Gerald Crich—there he Gerald wondered over her strange passion.

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And she could not rest any longer in London. They must go by the morning train from Charing Cross. As they drew over the bridge, in the train, having glimpses of the river between the great iron girders, she cried:

'I feel I could NEVER see this foul town again—I couldn't BEAR to come back to it.'

Chapter 29.

Continental.

Ursula went on in an unreal suspense, the last weeks before going away. She was not herself,—she was not anything.

She was something that is going to be—soon—soon—very soon. But as yet, she was only imminent.

She went to see her parents. It was a rather stiff, sad meeting, more like a verification of separateness than a reunion.

But they were all vague and indefinite with one another, stiffened in the fate that moved them apart.

She did not really come to until she was on the ship crossing from Dover to Ostend. Dimly she had come down to London with Birkin, London had been a vagueness, so had the train-journey to Dover. It was all like a sleep.

And now, at last, as she stood in the stern of the ship, in a

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pitch-dark, rather blowy night, feeling the motion of the sea, They seemed to fall away into the profound darkness.

and watching the small, rather desolate little lights that There was no sky, no earth, only one unbroken darkness, into twinkled on the shores of England, as on the shores of no-which, with a soft, sleeping motion, they seemed to fall like where, watched them sinking smaller and smaller on the pro-one closed seed of life falling through dark, fathomless space.

found and living darkness, she felt her soul stirring to awake They had forgotten where they were, forgotten all that from its anaesthetic sleep.

was and all that had been, conscious only in their heart, and

'Let us go forward, shall we?' said Birkin. He wanted to be there conscious only of this pure trajectory through the sur-at the tip of their projection. So they left off looking at the passing darkness. The ship's prow cleaved on, with a faint faint sparks that glimmered out of nowhere, in the far dis-noise of cleavage, into the complete night, without knowing, tance, called England, and turned their faces to the unfathomed without seeing, only surging on.

night in front.

In Ursula the sense of the unrealised world ahead tri-They went right to the bows of the softly plunging vessel.

umphed over everything. In the midst of this profound dark-In the complete obscurity, Birkin found a comparatively shel-ness, there seemed to glow on her heart the effulgence of a tered nook, where a great rope was coiled up. It

was quite near paradise unknown and unrealised. Her heart was full of the the very point of the ship, near the black, unpierced space most wonderful light, golden like honey of darkness, sweet ahead. There they sat down, folded together, folded round like the warmth of day, a light which was not shed on the with the same rug, creeping in nearer and ever nearer to one world, only on the unknown paradise towards which she was another, till it seemed they had crept right into each other, going, a sweetness of habitation, a delight of living quite un-and become one substance. It was very cold, and the darkness known, but hers infallibly. In her transport she lifted her face was palpable.

suddenly to him, and he touched it with his lips. So cold, so One of the ship's crew came along the deck, dark as the fresh, so sea-clear her face was, it was like kissing a flower that darkness, not really visible. They then made out the faintest grows near the surf.

pallor of his face. He felt their presence, and stopped, unBut he did not know the ecstasy of bliss in fore-knowl-sure—then bent forward. When his face was near them, he edge that she knew. To him, the wonder of this transit was saw the faint pallor of their faces. Then he withdrew like a overwhelming. He was falling through a gulf of infinite dark-phantom. And they watched him without making any sound.

ness, like a meteorite plunging across the chasm between the

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worlds. The world was torn in two, and he was plunging like English English, then trotting with heavy bags, their colourless an unlit star through the ineffable rift. What was beyond was blouses looking ghostly as they disappeared; Ursula stood at a not yet for him. He was overcome by the trajectory.

long, low, zinc-covered barrier, along with hundreds of other In a trance he lay enfolding Ursula round about. His face spectral people, and all the way down the vast, raw darkness was against her fine, fragile hair, he breathed its fragrance was this low stretch of open bags and spectral people, whilst, with the sea and the profound night. And his soul was at on the other side of the barrier, pallid officials in peaked caps peace; yielded, as he fell into the unknown. This was the first and moustaches were turning the underclothing in the bags, time that an utter and absolute peace had entered his heart, then scrawling a chalk-mark.

now, in this final transit out of life.

It was done. Birkin snapped the hand bags, off they went, When there came some stir on the deck, they roused. They the porter coming behind. They were through a great door-stood up. How stiff and cramped they were, in the night-way, and in the open night again—ah, a railway platform!

time! And yet the paradisal glow on her heart, and the unut-Voices were still calling in inhuman agitation through the terable peace of darkness in his, this was the all-in-all.

dark-grey air, spectres were running along the darkness be-They stood up and looked ahead. Low lights were seen tween the train.

down the darkness. This was the world again. It was not the

'Koln—Berlin—' Ursula made out on the boards hung on bliss of her heart, nor the peace of his. It was the superficial the high train on one side.

unreal world of fact. Yet not quite the old world. For the

'Here we are,' said Birkin. And on her side she saw: peace and the bliss in

their hearts was enduring.

'Elsass—Lothringen—Luxembourg, Metz—Basle.'

Strange, and desolate above all things, like disembarking

'That was it, Basle!'

from the Styx into the desolated underworld, was this land-The porter came up.

ing at night. There was the raw, half-lighted, covered-in vast-

'A Bale—deuxieme classe?—Voila!' And he clambered into ness of the dark place, boarded and hollow underfoot, with the high train. They followed. The compartments were alonly desolation everywhere. Ursula had caught sight of the ready some of them taken. But many were dim and empty.

big, pallid, mystic letters 'OSTEND,' standing in the dark-The luggage was stowed, the porter was tipped.

ness. Everybody was hurrying with a blind, insect-like in-

'Nous avons encore—?' said Birkin, looking at his watch tentness through the dark grey air, porters were calling in un-and at the porter.

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'Encore une demi-heure.' With which, in his blue blouse, she still to go! In one life-time one travelled through aeons.

he disappeared. He was ugly and insolent.

The great chasm of memory from her childhood in the inti-

'Come,' said Birkin. 'It is cold. Let us eat.'

mate country surroundings of Cossethay and the Marsh There was a coffee-wagon on the platform. They drank Farm—she remembered the servant Tilly, who used to give hot, watery coffee, and ate the long rolls, split, with ham beher bread and butter sprinkled with brown sugar, in the old tween, which were such a wide bite that it almost dislocated living-room where the grandfather clock had two pink roses Ursula's jaw; and they walked beside the high trains. It was all in a basket painted above the figures on the face—and now so strange, so extremely desolate, like the underworld, grey, when she was travelling into the unknown with Birkin, an grey, dirt grey, desolate, forlorn, nowhere—grey, dreary no-utter stranger—was so great, that it seemed she had no iden-where.

tity, that the child she had been, playing in Cossethay church-At last they were moving through the night. In the dark-yard, was a little creature of history, not really herself.

ness Ursula made out the flat fields, the wet flat dreary dark-They were at Brussels—half an hour for breakfast. They ness of the Continent. They pulled up surprisingly soon—

got down. On the great station clock it said six o'clock. They Bruges! Then on through the level darkness, with glimpses of had coffee and rolls and honey in the vast desert refreshment sleeping farms and thin poplar trees and deserted highroads.

room, so dreary, always so dreary, dirty, so spacious, such deso-She sat dismayed, hand in hand with Birkin. He pale, immolation of space. But she washed her face and hands in hot bile like a REVENANT himself, looked

sometimes out of water, and combed her hair—that was a blessing.

the window, sometimes closed his eyes. Then his eyes opened Soon they were in the train again and moving on. The again, dark as the darkness outside.

greyness of dawn began. There were several people in the com-A flash of a few lights on the darkness—Ghent station! A partment, large florid Belgian business-men with long brown few more spectres moving outside on the platform—then the beards, talking incessantly in an ugly French she was too tired bell—then motion again through the level darkness. Ursula to follow.

saw a man with a lantern come out of a farm by the railway, It seemed the train ran by degrees out of the darkness into and cross to the dark farmbuildings. She thought of the a faint light, then beat after beat into the day. Ah, how weary Marsh, the old, intimate farm-life at Cossethay. My God, it was! Faintly, the trees showed, like shadows. Then a house, how far was she projected from her childhood, how far was white, had a curious distinctness. How was it? Then she saw a **Contents**



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village—there were always houses passing.

was drawing near. This was the other world now.

This was an old world she was still journeying through, Innsbruck was wonderful, deep in snow, and evening. They winter-heavy and dreary. There

was plough-land and pas-drove in an open sledge over the snow: the train had been so ture, and copses of bare trees, copses of bushes, and home-hot and stifling. And the hotel, with the golden light glowing steads naked and workbare. No new earth had come to pass.

under the porch, seemed like a home.

She looked at Birkin's face. It was white and still and eter-They laughed with pleasure when they were in the hall.

nal, too eternal. She linked her fingers imploringly in his, The place seemed full and busy.

under the cover of her rug. His fingers responded, his eyes

'Do you know if Mr and Mrs Crich—English—from Paris, looked back at her. How dark, like a night, his eyes were, like have arrived?' Birkin asked in German.

another world beyond! Oh, if he were the world as well, if The porter reflected a moment, and was just going to an-only the world were he! If only he could call a world into swer, when Ursula caught sight of Gudrun sauntering down being, that should be their own world!

the stairs, wearing her dark glossy coat, with grey fur.

The Belgians left, the train ran on, through Luxembourg,

'Gudrun! Gudrun!' she called, waving up the well of the through Alsace-Lorraine, through Metz. But she was blind, staircase. 'Shu-hu!'

she could see no more. Her soul did not look out.

Gudrun looked over the rail, and immediately lost her saun-They came at last to Basle, to the hotel. It was all a drift-tering, diffident air. Her eyes flashed.

ing trance, from which she never came to. They went out in

'Really—Ursula!' she cried. And she began to move down-the morning,

before the train departed. She saw the street, stairs as Ursula ran up. They met at a turn and kissed with the river, she stood on the bridge. But it all meant nothing.

laughter and exclamations inarticulate and stirring.

She remembered some shops—one full of pictures, one with

'But!' cried Gudrun, mortified. 'We thought it was TO-orange velvet and ermine. But what did these signify?—noth-MORROW you were coming! I wanted to come to the sta-ing.

tion.'

She was not at ease till they were in the train again. Then

'No, we've come today!' cried Ursula. 'Isn't it lovely here!'

she was relieved. So long as they were moving onwards, she

'Adorable!' said Gudrun. 'Gerald's just gone out to get was satisfied. They came to Zurich, then, before very long, something. Ursula, aren't you FEARFULLY tired?'

ran under the mountains, that were deep in snow. At last she

'No, not so very. But I look a filthy sight, don't I!'

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'No, you don't. You look almost perfectly fresh. I like that some mistrust and wonder.

fur cap IMMENSELY!' She glanced over Ursula, who wore a When they had bathed and changed, Gerald came in. He big soft coat with a collar of deep, soft, blond fur, and a soft looked shining like the sun on frost.

blond cap of fur.

'Go with Gerald and smoke,' said Ursula to Birkin.

'And you!' cried Ursula. 'What do you think YOU look

'Gudrun and I want to talk.'

like!'

Then the sisters sat in Gudrun's bedroom, and talked Gudrun assumed an unconcerned, expressionless face.

clothes, and experiences. Gudrun told Ursula the experience

'Do you like it?' she said.

of the Birkin letter in the cafe. Ursula was shocked and fright-

'It's VERY fine!' cried Ursula, perhaps with a touch of ened.

satire.

'Where is the letter?' she asked.

'Go up—or come down,' said Birkin. For there the sisters

'I kept it,' said Gudrun.

stood, Gudrun with her hand on Ursula's arm, on the turn of

'You'll give it me, won't you?' she said.

the stairs half way to the first landing, blocking the way and But Gudrun was silent for some moments, before she re-affording full entertainment to the whole of the hall below, plied:

from the door porter to the plump Jew in black clothes.

'Do you really want it, Ursula?'

The two young women slowly mounted, followed by Birkin

'I want to read it,' said Ursula.

and the waiter.

'Certainly,' said Gudrun.

'First floor?' asked Gudrun, looking back over her shoul-Even now, she could not admit, to Ursula, that she wanted der.

to keep it, as a memento, or a symbol. But Ursula knew, and

'Second Madam—the lift!' the waiter replied. And he was not pleased. So the subject was switched off.

darted to the elevator to forestall the two women. But they

'What did you do in Paris?' asked Ursula.

ignored him, as, chattering without heed, they set to mount

'Oh,' said Gudrun laconically—'the usual things. We had the second flight. Rather chagrined, the waiter followed.

a FINE party one night in Fanny Bath's studio.'

It was curious, the delight of the sisters in each other, at 'Did you? And you and Gerald were there! Who else? this meeting. It was as if they met in exile, and united their Tell me about it.' solitary forces against all the world. Birkin looked on with

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'Well,' said Gudrun. 'There's nothing particular to tell.

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You know Fanny is FRIGHTFULLY in love with that

'Whole-hogger! I should think so!' exclaimed Gudrun.

painter, Billy Macfarlane. He was there—so Fanny spared

'But it is true, Ursula, every woman in the room was ready to nothing, she spent VERY freely. It was really remarkable! Of surrender to him. Chanticleer isn't in it—even Fanny Bath, course, everybody got fearfully drunk—but in an interesting who is GENUINELY in love with Billy Macfarlane! I never way, not like that filthy London crowd. The fact is these were was more amazed in my life! And you know, afterwards—I all people that matter, which makes all the difference. There felt I was a whole ROOMFUL of women. I was no more was a Roumanian, a fine chap. He got

completely drunk, and myself to him, than I was Queen Victoria. I was a whole room-climbed to the top of a high studio ladder, and gave the most ful of women at once. It was most astounding! But my eye, marvellous address —really, Ursula, it was wonderful! He be-I'd caught a Sultan that time—'

gan in French—La vie, c'est une affaire d'ames imperiales—

Gudrun's eyes were flashing, her cheek was hot, she looked in a most beautiful voice—he was a fine-looking chap—but strange, exotic, satiric. Ursula was fascinated at once—and yet he had got into Roumanian before he had finished, and not a uneasy.

soul understood. But Donald Gilchrist was worked to a frenzy.

They had to get ready for dinner. Gudrun came down in a He dashed his glass to the ground, and declared, by God, he daring gown of vivid green silk and tissue of gold, with green was glad he had been born, by God, it was a miracle to be velvet bodice and a strange black-and-white band round her alive. And do you know, Ursula, so it was—' Gudrun laughed hair. She was really brilliantly beautiful and everybody no-rather hollowly.

ticed her. Gerald was in that full-blooded, gleaming state when

'But how was Gerald among them all?' asked Ursula.

he was most handsome. Birkin watched them with quick,

'Gerald! Oh, my word, he came out like a dandelion in the laughing, half-sinister eyes, Ursula quite lost her head. There sun! HE'S a whole saturnalia in himself, once he is roused. I seemed a spell, almost a blinding spell, cast round their table, shouldn't like to say whose waist his arm did not go round.

as if they were lighted up more strongly than the rest of the Really, Ursula, he seems to reap the women like a harvest.

diningroom.

There wasn't one that would have resisted him. It was too

'Don't you love to be in this place?' cried Gudrun. 'Isn't amazing! Can you understand it?'

the snow wonderful! Do you notice how it exalts everything?

Ursula reflected, and a dancing light came into her eyes.

It is simply mar vellous. One really does feel

'Yes,' she said. 'I can. He is such a whole-hogger.'

LIBERMENSCHLICH—more than human.'

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'One does,' cried Ursula. 'But isn't that partly the being

'Don't be too hard on poor old England,' said Gerald.

out of England?'

'Though we curse it, we love it really.'

'Oh, of course,' cried Gudrun. 'One could never feel like To Ursula, there seemed a fund of cynicism in these words.

this in England, for the simple reason that the damper is

'We may,' said Birkin. 'But it's a damnably uncomfort-NEVER lifted off one, there. It is quite impossible really to able love: like a love for an aged parent who suffers horribly let go, in England, of that I am assured.'

from a complication of diseases, for which there is no hope.'

And she turned again to the food she was eating. She was Gudrun looked at him with dilated dark eyes.

fluttering with vivid intensity.

'You think there is no hope?' she asked, in her pertinent

'It's quite true,' said Gerald, 'it never is quite the same in fashion.

England. But perhaps we don't want it to be—perhaps it's But Birkin backed away. He would not answer such a ques-like bringing the light a little too near the powder-magazine, tion.

to let go altogether, in England. One is afraid what might

'Any hope of England's becoming real? God knows. It's a happen, if EVERYBODY ELSE let go.'

great actual unreality now, an aggregation into unreality. It

'My God!' cried Gudrun. 'But wouldn't it be wonderful, might be real, if there were no Englishmen.'

if all England did suddenly go off like a display of fireworks.'

'You think the English will have to disappear?' persisted

'It couldn't,' said Ursula. 'They are all too damp, the pow-Gudrun. It was strange, her pointed interest in his answer. It der is damp in them.'

might have been her own fate she was inquiring after. Her

'I'm not so sure of that,' said Gerald.

dark, dilated eyes rested on Birkin, as if she could conjure the

'Nor I,' said Birkin. 'When the English really begin to go truth of the future out of him, as out of some instrument of off, EN MASSE, it'll be time to shut your ears and run.'

divination.

'They never will,' said Ursula.

He was pale. Then, reluctantly, he answered:

'We'll see,' he replied.

'Well—what else is in front of them, but disappearance?

'Isn't it marvellous,' said Gudrun, 'how thankful one can They've got to disappear from their own special brand of be, to be out of one's country. I cannot believe myself, I am so Englishness, anyhow.'

transported, the moment I set foot on a foreign shore. I say to Gudrun watched him as if in a hypnotic state, her eyes myself "Here steps a new creature into life."

wide and fixed on him.

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'But in what way do you mean, disappear?—' she per-do with herself, when she had destroyed herself? For if spirit, sisted.

if integral being is destructible, Matter is indestructible.

'Yes, do you mean a change of heart?' put in Gerald.

He was looking bright and abstracted, puzzled, for the

'I don't mean anything, why should I?' said Birkin. 'I'm an moment. She stretched out her beautiful arm, with its fluff Englishman, and I've paid the price of it. I can't talk about of green tulle, and touched his chin with her subtle, artist's England—I can only speak for myself.'

fingers.

'Yes,' said Gudrun slowly, 'you love England immensely,

'What are they then?' she asked, with a strange, knowing IMMENSELY, Rupert.'

smile.

'And leave her,' he replied.

'What?' he replied, his eyes suddenly dilating with won-

'No, not for good. You'll come back,' said Gerald, nodding der.

sagely.

'Your thoughts.'

'They say the lice crawl off a dying body,' said Birkin, Gerald looked like a man coming awake.

with a glare of bitterness. 'So I leave England.'

'I think I had none,' he said.

'Ah, but you'll come back,' said Gudrun, with a sardonic

'Really!' she said, with grave laughter in her voice.

smile.

And to Birkin it was as if she killed Gerald, with that

'Tant pis pour moi,' he replied.

touch.

'Isn't he angry with his mother country!' laughed Gerald,

'Ah but,' cried Gudrun, 'let us drink to Britannia—let us amused.

drink to Britannia.'

'Ah, a patriot!' said Gudrun, with something like a sneer.

It seemed there was wild despair in her voice. Gerald Birkin refused to answer any more.

laughed, and filled the glasses.

Gudrun watched him still for a few seconds. Then she

'I think Rupert means,' he said, 'that NATIONALLY all turned away. It was finished, her spell of divination in him.

Englishmen must die, so that they can exist individually and—

She felt already purely cynical. She looked at Gerald. He was

wonderful like a piece of radium to her. She felt she could

'Supernationally—' put in Gudrun, with a slight ironic consume herself and know ALL, by means of this fatal, living grimace, raising her glass.

metal. She smiled to herself at her fancy. And what would she The next day, they descended at the tiny railway station

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of Hohenhausen, at the end of the tiny valley railway. It was Gudrun, always doubtful, dropped her heavy coat on the snow everywhere, a white, perfect cradle of snow, new and sledge, as he did his, and they set off. Suddenly she threw up frozen, sweeping up an either side, black crags, and white her head and set off scudding along the road of snow, pulling sweeps of silver towards the blue pale heavens.

her cap down over her ears. Her blue, bright dress fluttered in As they stepped out on the naked platform, with only the wind, her thick scarlet stockings were brilliant above the snow around and above, Gudrun shrank as if it chilled her whiteness. Gerald watched her: she seemed to be rushing toheart.

wards her fate, and leaving him behind. He let her get some

'My God, Jerry,' she said, turning to Gerald with sudden distance, then, loosening his limbs, he went after her.

intimacy, 'you've done it now.'

Everywhere was deep and silent snow. Great snow-eaves

'What?'

weighed down the broad-roofed Tyrolese houses, that were She made a faint gesture, indicating the world on either sunk to the window-sashes in snow. Peasant-women, full-hand.

skirted, wearing each a cross-over shawl, and thick snow-boots,

'Look at it!'

turned in the way to look at the soft, determined girl running She seemed afraid to go on. He laughed.

with such heavy fleetness from the man, who was overtaking They were in the heart of the mountains. From high above, her, but not gaining any power over her.

on either side, swept down the white fold of snow, so that one They passed the inn with its painted shutters and bal-seemed small and tiny in a valley of pure concrete heaven, all cony, a few cottages, half buried in the snow; then the snow-strangely radiant and changeless and silent.

buried silent sawmill by the roofed bridge, which crossed the

'It makes one feel so small and alone,' said Ursula, turning hidden stream, over which they ran into the very depth of the to Birkin and laying her hand on his arm.

untouched sheets of snow. It was a silence and a sheer white-

'You're not sorry you've come, are you?' said Gerald to ness exhilarating to madness. But the perfect silence was most Gudrun.

terrifying, isolating the soul, surrounding the heart with fro-She looked doubtful. They went out of the station be-zen air.

tween banks of snow.

'It's a marvellous place, for all that,' said Gudrun, looking

'Ah,' said Gerald, sniffing the air in elation, 'this is perfect.

into his eyes with a strange, meaning look. His soul leapt.

There's our sledge. We'll walk a bit—we'll run up the road.'

'Good,' he said.

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A fierce electric energy seemed to flow over all his limbs, up, gradually they went, through the cold shadow-radiance his muscles were surcharged, his hands felt hard with strength.

of the afternoon, silenced by the imminence of the moun-They walked along rapidly up the snow-road, that was marked tains, the luminous, dazing sides of snow that rose above them by withered branches of trees stuck in at intervals. He and and fell away beneath.

she were separate, like opposite poles of one fierce energy. But They came forth at last in a little high table-land of snow, they felt powerful enough to leap over the confines of life where stood the last peaks of snow like the heart

petals of an into the forbidden places, and back again.

open rose. In the midst of the last deserted valleys of heaven Birkin and Ursula were running along also, over the snow.

stood a lonely building with brown wooden walls and white He had disposed of the luggage, and they had a little start of heavy roof, deep and deserted in the waste of snow, like a the sledges. Ursula was excited and happy, but she kept turn-dream. It stood like a rock that had rolled down from the last ing suddenly to catch hold of Birkin's arm, to make sure of steep slopes, a rock that had taken the form of a house, and him.

was now half-buried. It was unbelievable that one could live

'This is something I never expected,' she said. 'It is a dif-there uncrushed by all this terrible waste of whiteness and ferent world, here.'

silence and clear, upper, ringing cold.

They went on into a snow meadow. There they were over-Yet the sledges ran up in fine style, people came to the taken by the sledge, that came tinkling through the silence. It door laughing and excited, the floor of the hostel rang hollow, was another mile before they came upon Gudrun and Gerald the passage was wet with snow, it was a real, warm interior.

on the steep up-climb, beside the pink, half-buried shrine.

The newcomers tramped up the bare wooden stairs, fol-Then they passed into a gulley, where were walls of black lowing the serving woman. Gudrun and Gerald took the first rock and a river filled with snow, and a still blue sky above.

bedroom. In a moment they found themselves alone in a bare, Through a covered bridge they went, drumming roughly over smallish, close-shut room that was all of golden-coloured wood, the boards, crossing the snow-bed once more, then slowly up floor, walls, ceiling, door, all of the same warm gold panelling and up, the horses walking swiftly, the driver cracking his of oiled pine. There was a window opposite the door, but low long whip as he walked

beside, and calling his strange wild down, because the roof sloped. Under the slope of the ceiling HUE-HUE!, the walls of rock passing slowly by, till they were the table with wash-hand bowl and jug, and across, an-emerged again between slopes and masses of snow. Up and other table with mirror. On either side the door were two **Contents**



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beds piled high with an enormous blue-checked overbolster, ness of pinetrees, like hair, round the base. But the cradle of enormous.

snow ran on to the eternal closing-in, where the walls of snow This was all—no cupboard, none of the amenities of life.

and rock rose impenetrable, and the mountain peaks above Here they were shut up together in this cell of golden-coloured were in heaven immediate. This was the centre, the knot, the wood, with two blue checked beds. They looked at each other navel of the world, where the earth belonged to the skies, and laughed, frightened by this naked nearness of isolation.

pure, unapproachable, impassable.

A man knocked and came in with the luggage. He was a It filled Gudrun with a strange rapture. She crouched in sturdy fellow with flattish cheek-bones, rather pale, and with front of the window, clenching her face in her hands, in a sort coarse fair moustache. Gudrun watched him put down the of trance. At last she had arrived, she had reached her place.

bags, in silence, then tramp heavily out.

Here at last she folded her venture and settled down like a

'It isn't too rough, is it?' Gerald asked.

crystal in the navel of snow, and was gone.

The bedroom was not very warm, and she shivered slightly.

Gerald bent above her and was looking out over her shoul-

'It is wonderful,' she equivocated. 'Look at the colour of der. Already he felt he was alone. She was gone. She was com-this panelling—it's wonderful, like being inside a nut.'

pletely gone, and there was icy vapour round his heart. He He was standing watching her, feeling his short-cut mous-saw the blind valley, the great culde-sac of snow and moun-tache, leaning back slightly and watching her with his keen, tain peaks, under the heaven. And there was no way out. The undaunted eyes, dominated by the constant passion, that was terrible silence and cold and the glamorous whiteness of the like a doom upon him.

dusk wrapped him round, and she remained crouching be-She went and crouched down in front of the window, cu-fore the window, as at a shrine, a shadow.

rious.

'Do you like it?' he asked, in a voice that sounded detached

'Oh, but this—!' she cried involuntarily, almost in pain.

and foreign. At least she might acknowledge he was with her.

In front was a valley shut in under the sky, the last huge But she only averted her soft, mute face a little from his gaze.

slopes of snow and black rock, and at the end, like the navel of And he knew

that there were tears in her eyes, her own tears, the earth, a white-folded wall, and two peaks glimmering in tears of her strange religion, that put him to nought.

the late light. Straight in front ran the cradle of silent snow, Quite suddenly, he put his hand under her chin and lifted between the great slopes that were fringed with a little rough-up her face to him. Her dark blue eyes, in their wetness of **Contents**



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tears, dilated as if she was startled in her very soul. They looked little delirium. And to him, she was so sweet, she was such at him through their tears in terror and a little horror. His bliss of release, that he would have suffered a whole eternity light blue eyes were keen, small-pupilled and unnatural in of torture rather than forego one second of this pang of their vision. Her lips parted, as she breathed with difficulty.

unsurpassable bliss.

The passion came up in him, stroke after stroke, like the

'My God,' he said to her, his face drawn and strange, trans-ringing of a bronze bell, so strong and unflawed and indomi-figured, 'what next?'

table. His knees tightened to bronze as he hung above her She lay perfectly still, with a still, childlike face and dark soft face, whose lips parted and whose eyes dilated in a strange eyes, looking at him. She was lost, fallen right

away.

violation. In the grasp of his hand her chin was unutterably

'I shall always love you,' he said, looking at her.

soft and silken. He felt strong as winter, his hands were living But she did not hear. She lay, looking at him as at some-metal, invincible and not to be turned aside. His heart rang thing she could never understand, never: as a child looks at a like a bell clanging inside him.

grown-up person, without hope of understanding, only sub-He took her up in his arms. She was soft and inert, mo-mitting.

tionless. All the while her eyes, in which the tears had not yet He kissed her, kissed her eyes shut, so that she could not dried, were dilated as if in a kind of swoon of fascination and look any more. He wanted something now, some recognition, helplessness. He was superhumanly strong, and unflawed, as some sign, some admission. But she only lay silent and child-if invested with supernatural force.

like and remote, like a child that is overcome and cannot un-He lifted her close and folded her against him. Her soft-derstand, only feels lost. He kissed her again, giving up.

ness, her inert, relaxed weight lay against his own surcharged,

'Shall we go down and have coffee and Kuchen?' he asked.

bronze-like limbs in a heaviness of desirability that would The twilight was falling slate-blue at the window. She destroy him, if he were not fulfilled. She moved convulsively, closed her eyes, closed away the monotonous level of dead recoiling away from him. His heart went up like a flame of wonder, and opened them again to the everyday world.

ice, he closed over her like steel. He would destroy her rather

'Yes,' she said briefly, regaining her will with a click. She than be denied.

went again to the window. Blue evening had fallen over the But the overweening power of his body was too much for cradle of snow and over the great pallid slopes. But in the her. She relaxed again, and lay loose and soft, panting in a heaven the peaks of snow were rosy, glistening like transcen-

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dent, radiant spikes of blossom in the heavenly upper-world, unbeschreiblich and all the other German adjectives.'

so lovely and beyond.

Gerald broke into a slight smile.

Gudrun saw all their loveliness, she KNEW how immor-

'I like it,' he said.

tally beautiful they were, great pistils of rose-coloured, snow-The tables, of white scrubbed wood, were placed round fed fire in the blue twilight of the heaven. She could SEE it, three sides of the room, as in a Gasthaus. Birkin and Ursula she knew it, but she was not of it. She was divorced, debarred, sat with their backs to the wall, which was of oiled wood, and a soul shut out.

Gerald and Gudrun sat in the corner next them, near to the With a last look of

remorse, she turned away, and was do-stove. It was a fairly large place, with a tiny bar, just like a ing her hair. He had unstrapped the luggage, and was wait-country inn, but quite simple and bare, and all of oiled wood, ing, watching her. She knew he was watching her. It made her ceilings and walls and floor, the only furniture being the tables a little hasty and feverish in her precipitation.

and benches going round three sides, the great green stove, They went downstairs, both with a strange otherworld and the bar and the doors on the fourth side. The windows look on their faces, and with a glow in their eyes. They saw were double, and quite uncurtained. It was early evening.

Birkin and Ursula sitting at the long table in a corner, waiting The coffee came—hot and good—and a whole ring of cake.

for them.

'A whole Kuchen!' cried Ursula. 'They give you more than

'How good and simple they look together,' Gudrun us! I want some of yours.'

thought, jealously. She envied them some spontaneity, a childish There were other people in the place, ten altogether, so sufficiency to which she herself could never approach. They Birkin had found out: two artists, three students, a man and seemed such children to her.

wife, and a Professor and two daughters—all Germans. The

'Such good Kranzkuchen!' cried Ursula greedily. 'So good!'

four English people, being newcomers, sat in their coign of

'Right,' said Gudrun. 'Can we have Kaffee mit vantage to watch. The Germans peeped in at the door, called Kranzkuchen?' she added to the waiter.

a word to the waiter, and went away again. It was not meal-And she seated herself on the bench beside Gerald. Birkin, time, so they did not come into this diningroom, but betook looking at them, felt a pain of tenderness for them.

themselves, when their boots were changed, to the Reunionsaal.

'I think the place is really wonderful, Gerald,' he said; The English visitors could hear the occasional twanging

'prachtvoll and wunderbar and wunderschon and of a zither, the strumming of a piano, snatches of laughter

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and shouting and singing, a faint vibration of voices. The whole looking their way. Then, the host was bowing to a short, ener-building being of wood, it seemed to carry every sound, like a getic-looking man with large moustaches, and saying in a low drum, but instead of increasing each particular noise, it de-voice: creased it, so that the sound of the zither seemed tiny, as if a

'Herr Professor, darf ich vorstellen-'

diminutive zither were playing somewhere, and it seemed the The Herr Professor was prompt and energetic. He bowed piano must be a small one, like a little spinet.

low to the English people, smiling, and began to be a com-The host came when the coffee was finished. He was a rade at once.

Tyrolese, broad, rather flat-cheeked, with a pale, pock-marked

'Nehmen die Herrschaften teil an unserer Unterhaltung?'

skin and flourishing moustaches.

he said, with a vigorous suavity, his voice curling up in the

'Would you like to go to the Reunionsaal to be intro-question.

duced to the other ladies and gentlemen?' he asked, bending The four English people smiled, lounging with an atten-forward and smiling, showing his large, strong teeth. His blue tive uneasiness in the middle of the room. Gerald, who was eyes went quickly from one to the other—he was not quite spokesman, said that they would willingly take part in the sure of his ground with these English people. He was un-entertainment. Gudrun and Ursula, laughing, excited, felt the happy too because he spoke no English and he was not sure eyes of all the men upon them, and they lifted their heads whether to try his French.

and looked nowhere, and felt royal.

'Shall we go to the Reunionsaal, and be introduced to the The Professor announced the names of those present, other people?' repeated Gerald, laughing.

SANS CEREMONIE. There was a bowing to the wrong There was a moment's hesitation.

people and to the right people. Everybody was there, except

'I suppose we'd better—better break the ice,' said Birkin.

the man and wife. The two tall, clear-skinned, athletic daugh-The women rose, rather flushed. And the Wirt's black, ters of the professor, with their plain-cut, dark blue blouses beetle-like, broad-shouldered figure went on ignominiously and loden skirts, their rather long, strong necks, their clear in front, towards the noise. He opened the door and ushered blue eyes and carefully banded hair, and their blushes, bowed the four strangers into the

play-room.

and stood back; the three students bowed very low, in the Instantly a silence fell, a slight embarrassment came over humble hope of making an impression of extreme good-breed-the company. The newcomers had a sense of many blond faces ing; then there was a thin, dark-skinned man with full eyes, **Contents**



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an odd creature, like a child, and like a troll, quick, detached; had broken off; in a controlled, mocking voice, giving an imi-he bowed slightly; his companion, a large fair young man, tation of a quarrel between an old Cologne woman and a stylishly dressed, blushed to the eyes and bowed very low.

railway guard.

It was over.

His body was slight and unformed, like a boy's, but his

'Herr Loerke was giving us a recitation in the Cologne voice was mature, sardonic, its movement had the flexibility dialect,' said the Professor.

of essential energy, and of a mocking penetrating understand-

'He must forgive us for interrupting him,' said Gerald, ing. Gudrun could not

understand a word of his monologue,

'we should like very much to hear it.'

but she was spellbound, watching him. He must be an artist, There was instantly a bowing and an offering of seats.

nobody else could have such fine adjustment and singleness.

Gudrun and Ursula, Gerald and Birkin sat in the deep sofas The Germans were doubled up with laughter, hearing his against the wall. The room was of naked oiled panelling, like strange droll words, his droll phrases of dialect. And in the the rest of the house. It had a piano, sofas and chairs, and a midst of their paroxysms, they glanced with deference at the couple of tables with books and magazines. In its complete four English strangers, the elect. Gudrun and Ursula were absence of decoration, save for the big, blue stove, it was cosy forced to laugh. The room rang with shouts of laughter. The and pleasant.

blue eyes of the Professor's daughters were swimming over Herr Loerke was the little man with the boyish figure, with laughter-tears, their clear cheeks were flushed crimson and the round, full, sensitive-looking head, and the quick, with mirth, their father broke out in the most astonishing full eyes, like a mouse's. He glanced swiftly from one to the peals of hilarity, the students bowed their heads on their knees other of the strangers, and held himself aloof.

in excess of joy. Ursula looked round amazed, the laughter

'Please go on with the recitation,' said the Professor, suavely, was bubbling out of her involuntarily. She looked at Gudrun.

with his slight authority. Loerke, who was sitting hunched on Gudrun looked at her, and the two sisters burst out laughing, the piano stool, blinked and did not answer.

carried away. Loerke glanced at them swiftly, with his full

'It would be a great pleasure,' said Ursula, who had been eyes. Birkin was sniggering involuntarily. Gerald Crich sat getting the sentence ready, in German, for some minutes.

erect, with a glistening look of amusement on his face. And Then, suddenly, the small, unresponding man swung aside, the laughter crashed out again, in wild paroxysms, the towards his previous audience and broke forth, exactly as he Professor's daughters were reduced to shaking helplessness, **Contents**



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the veins of the Professor's neck were swollen, his face was and untrammelled. Birkin was well in the background, she purple, he was strangled in ultimate, silent spasms of laugh-shone almost in reaction, the Germans made her feel fine and ter. The students were shouting half-articulated words that infallible, she was liberated into overweening self-confidence.

tailed off in helpless explosions. Then suddenly the rapid patter She felt like a bird flying in the air, as her voice soared out, of the artist ceased, there were little whoops of subsiding mirth, enjoying herself extremely in the balance and flight of the Ursula and Gudrun were wiping their eyes, and the Professor song, like the motion of a bird's wings that is up in the wind, was crying loudly.

sliding and playing on the air, she played with sentimentality,

'Das war ausgezeichnet, das war famos—'

supported by rapturous attention. She was very happy, sing-

'Wirklich famos,' echoed his exhausted daughters, faintly.

ing that song by herself, full of a conceit of emotion and

'And we couldn't understand it,' cried Ursula.

power, working upon all those people, and upon herself, ex-

'Oh leider, leider!' cried the Professor.

erting herself with gratification, giving immeasurable gratifi-

'You couldn't understand it?' cried the Students, let loose cation to the Germans.

at last in speech with the newcomers. 'Ja, das ist wirklich At the end, the Germans were all touched with admiring, schade, das ist schade, gnadige Frau. Wissen Sie—'

delicious melancholy, they praised her in soft, reverent voices, The mixture was made, the newcomers were stirred into they could not say too much.

the party, like new ingredients, the whole room was alive.

'Wie schon, wie ruhrend! Ach, die Schottischen Lieder, Gerald was in his element, he talked freely and excitedly, his sie haben so viel Stimmung! Aber die gnadige Frau hat eine face glistened with a strange amusement. Perhaps even Birkin, WUNDERBARE Stimme; die gnadige Frau ist wirklich eine in the end, would break forth. He was shy and withheld, Kunstlerin, aber wirklich!'

though full of attention.

She was dilated and brilliant, like a flower in the morning Ursula was prevailed upon to sing 'Annie Lowrie,' as the sun. She felt Birkin looking at her, as if he were jealous of her, Professor called it. There was a hush of EXTREME defer-and her breasts thrilled, her veins were all golden. She was

as ence. She had never been so flattered in her life. Gudrun ac-happy as the sun that has just opened above clouds. And ev-companied her on the piano, playing from memory.

erybody seemed so admiring and radiant, it was perfect.

Ursula had a beautiful ringing voice, but usually no confi-After dinner she wanted to go out for a minute, to look at dence, she spoiled everything. This evening she felt conceited the world. The company tried to dissuade her—it was so ter-

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ribly cold. But just to look, she said.

'What then?' he asked.

They all four wrapped up warmly, and found themselves

'Do you love me?' she asked.

in a vague, unsubstantial outdoors of dim snow and ghosts of

'Too much,' he answered quietly.

an upper-world, that made strange shadows before the stars.

She clung a little closer.

It was indeed cold, bruisingly, frighteningly, unnaturally cold.

'Not too much,' she pleaded.

Ursula could not believe the air in her nostrils. It seemed

'Far too much,' he said, almost sadly.

conscious, malevolent, purposive in its intense murderous

'And does it make you sad, that I am everything to you?'

coldness.

she asked, wistful. He held her close to him, kissing her, and Yet it was wonderful, an intoxication, a silence of dim, saying, scarcely audible:

unrealised snow, of the invisible intervening between her and

'No, but I feel like a beggar—I feel poor.'

the visible, between her and the flashing stars. She could see She was silent, looking at the stars now. Then she kissed Orion sloping up. How wonderful he was, wonderful enough him.

to make one cry aloud.

'Don't be a beggar,' she pleaded, wistfully. 'It isn't igno-And all around was this cradle of snow, and there was firm minious that you love me.'

snow underfoot, that struck with heavy cold through her boot-

'It is ignominious to feel poor, isn't it?' he replied.

soles. It was night, and silence. She imagined she could hear

'Why? Why should it be?' she asked. He only stood still, the stars. She

imagined distinctly she could hear the celestial, in the terribly cold air that moved invisibly over the moun-musical motion of the stars, quite near at hand. She seemed tain tops, folding her round with his arms.

like a bird flying amongst their harmonious motion.

'I couldn't bear this cold, eternal place without you,' he And she clung close to Birkin. Suddenly she realised she said. 'I couldn't bear it, it would kill the quick of my life.'

did not know what he was thinking. She did not know where She kissed him again, suddenly.

he was ranging.

'Do you hate it?' she asked, puzzled, wondering.

'My love!' she said, stopping to look at him.

'If I couldn't come near to you, if you weren't here, I should His face was pale, his eyes dark, there was a faint spark of hate it. I couldn't bear it,' he answered.

starlight on them. And he saw her face soft and upturned to

'But the people are nice,' she said.

him, very near. He kissed her softly.

'I mean the stillness, the cold, the frozen eternality,' he

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said.

play of an unreal life. It was as unreal, and circumscribed, as a She wondered. Then her spirit came home to him, nest-magic-lantern show. She wished the slides could all be bro-ling unconscious in him.

ken. She wished it could be gone for ever, like a lantern-slide

'Yes, it is good we are warm and together,' she said.

which was broken. She wanted to have no past. She wanted to And they turned home again. They saw the golden lights have come down from the slopes of heaven to this place, with of the hotel glowing out in the night of snow-silence, small in Birkin, not to have toiled out of the murk of her childhood the hollow, like a cluster of yellow berries. It seemed like a and her upbringing, slowly, all soiled. She felt that memory bunch of sun-sparks, tiny and orange in the midst of the snow-was a dirty trick played upon her. What was this decree, that darkness. Behind, was a high shadow of a peak, blotting out she should 'remember'! Why not a bath of pure oblivion, a the stars, like a ghost.

new birth, without any recollections or blemish of a past life.

They drew near to their home. They saw a man come from She was with Birkin, she had just come into life, here in the the dark building, with a lighted lantern which swung golden, high snow, against the stars. What had she to do with parents and made that his dark feet walked in a halo of snow. He was and antecedents? She knew herself new and unbegotten, she a small, dark figure in the darkened snow. He unlatched the had no father, no mother, no anterior connections, she was door of an outhouse. A smell of cows, hot, animal, almost like herself, pure and silvery, she belonged only to the oneness beef, came out on the heavily cold air. There was a glimpse of with

Birkin, a oneness that struck deeper notes, sounding into two cattle in their dark stalls, then the door was shut again, the heart of the universe, the heart of reality, where she had and not a chink of light showed. It had reminded Ursula again never existed before.

of home, of the Marsh, of her childhood, and of the journey Even Gudrun was a separate unit, separate, separate, hav-to Brussels, and, strangely, of Anton Skrebensky.

ing nothing to do with this self, this Ursula, in her new world Oh, God, could one bear it, this past which was gone down of reality. That old shadow-world, the actuality of the past—

the abyss? Could she bear, that it ever had been! She looked ah, let it go! She rose free on the wings of her new condition.

round this silent, upper world of snow and stars and powerful Gudrun and Gerald had not come in. They had walked cold. There was another world, like views on a magic lantern; up the valley straight in front of the house, not like Ursula The Marsh, Cossethay, Ilkeston, lit up with a common, un-and Birkin, on to the little hill at the right. Gudrun was driven real light. There was a shadowy unreal Ursula, a whole shadow-by a strange desire. She wanted to plunge on and on, till she **Contents**



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came to the end of the valley of snow. Then she wanted to who was exceedingly happy. Everybody was dancing, there climb the wall of white

finality, climb over, into the peaks was the most boisterous turmoil.

that sprang up like sharp petals in the heart of the frozen, Gudrun looked on with delight. The solid wooden floor mysterious navel of the world. She felt that there, over the resounded to the knocking heels of the men, the air quivered strange blind, terrible wall of rocky snow, there in the navel of with the clapping hands and the zither music, there was a the mystic world, among the final cluster of peaks, there, in golden dust about the hanging lamps.

the infolded navel of it all, was her consummation. If she Suddenly the dance finished, Loerke and the students could but come there, alone, and pass into the infolded navel rushed out to bring in drinks. There was an excited clamour of eternal snow and of uprising, immortal peaks of snow and of voices, a clinking of mug-lids, a great crying of 'Prosit— rock, she would be a oneness with all, she would be herself the Prosit!' Loerke was everywhere at once, like a gnome, suggest-eternal, infinite silence, the sleeping, timeless, frozen centre ing drinks for the women, making an obscure, slightly risky of the All.

joke with the men, confusing and mystifying the waiter.

They went back to the house, to the Reunionsaal. She was He wanted very much to dance with Gudrun. From the curious to see what was going on. The men there made her first moment he had seen her, he wanted to make a connec-alert, roused her curiosity. It was a new taste of life for her, tion with her. Instinctively she felt this, and she waited for they were so prostrate before her, yet so full of life.

him to come up. But a kind of sulkiness kept him away from The party was boisterous; they were dancing all together, her, so she thought he disliked her.

dancing the Schuhplatteln, the Tyrolese dance of the clap-

'Will you schuhplatteln, gnadige Frau?' said the large, fair ping hands and tossing the partner in the air at the crisis. The youth, Loerke's companion. He was too soft, too humble for Germans were all proficient—they were from Munich chiefly.

Gudrun's taste. But she wanted to dance, and the fair youth, Gerald also was quite passable. There were three zithers twang-who was called Leitner, was handsome enough in his uneasy, ing away in a corner. It was a scene of great animation and slightly abject fashion, a humility that covered a certain fear.

confusion. The Professor was initiating Ursula into the dance, She accepted him as a partner.

stamping, clapping, and swinging her high, with amazing force The zithers sounded out again, the dance began. Gerald and zest. When the crisis came even Birkin was behaving led them, laughing, with one of the Professor's daughters.

manfully with one of the Professor's fresh, strong daughters, Ursula danced with one of the students, Birkin with the other

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daughter of the Professor, the Professor with Frau Kramer, were a palpitating bird, a fluttering, flushing, bewildered crea-and the rest of the men danced together, with quite as much ture. And it made him smile, as she shrank convulsively be-zest as if they had had women partners.

tween his hands, violently, when he must throw her into the Because Gudrun had danced with the well-built, soft air. At the end, she was so overcome with prostrate love for youth, his companion, Loerke, was more pettish and

exasper-him, that she could scarcely speak sensibly at all.

ated than ever, and would not even notice her existence in the Birkin was dancing with Ursula. There were odd little fires room. This piqued her, but she made up to herself by danc-playing in his eyes, he seemed to have turned into something ing with the Professor, who was strong as a mature, well-seawicked and flickering, mocking, suggestive, quite impossible.

soned bull, and as full of coarse energy. She could not bear Ursula was frightened of him, and fascinated. Clear, before him, critically, and yet she enjoyed being rushed through the her eyes, as in a vision, she could see the sardonic, licentious dance, and tossed up into the air, on his coarse, powerful im-mockery of his eyes, he moved towards her with subtle, ani-petus. The Professor enjoyed it too, he eyed her with strange, mal, indifferent approach. The strangeness of his hands, which large blue eyes, full of galvanic fire. She hated him for the came quick and cunning, inevitably to the vital place beneath seasoned, semi-paternal animalism with which he regarded her breasts, and, lifting with mocking, suggestive impulse, her, but she admired his weight of strength.

carried her through the air as if without strength, through The room was charged with excitement and strong, ani-blackmagic, made her swoon with fear. For a moment she remal emotion. Loerke was kept away from Gudrun, to whom volted, it was horrible. She would break the spell. But before he wanted to speak, as by a hedge of thorns, and he felt a the resolution had formed she had submitted again, yielded sardonic ruthless hatred for this young love-companion, to her fear. He knew all the time what he was doing, she could Leitner, who was his penniless dependent. He mocked the see it in his smiling, concentrated eyes. It was his responsibil-youth, with an acid ridicule, that made Leitner red in the face ity, she would leave it to him.

and impotent with resentment.

When they were alone in the darkness, she felt the strange, Gerald, who had now got the dance perfectly, was dancing licentiousness of him hovering upon her. She was troubled again with the younger of the Professor's daughters, who was and repelled. Why should he turn like this?

almost dying of virgin excitement, because she thought Gerald

'What is it?' she asked in dread.

so handsome, so superb. He had her in his power, as if she But his face only glistened on her, unknown, horrible. And

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yet she was fascinated. Her impulse was to repel him vio-bestial. How good it was to be really shameful! There would lently, break from this spell of mocking brutishness. But she be no shameful thing she had not experienced. Yet she was was too fascinated, she wanted to submit, she wanted to know.

unabashed, she was herself. Why not? She was free, when she What would he do to her?

knew everything, and no dark shameful things were denied He was so attractive, and so repulsive at one. The sardonic her.

suggestivity that flickered over his face and looked from his Gudrun, who had been watching Gerald in the narrowed eyes, made her want to hide, to hide herself away Reunionsaal, suddenly thought:

from him and watch him from somewhere unseen.

'He should have all the women he can—it is his nature. It

'Why are you like this?' she demanded again, rousing is absurd to call him monogamous—he is naturally promis-against him with sudden force and animosity.

cuous. That is his nature.'

The flickering fires in his eyes concentrated as he looked The thought came to her involuntarily. It shocked her some-into her eyes. Then the lids drooped with a faint motion of what. It was as if she had seen some new MENE!

MENE!

satiric contempt. Then they rose again to the same remorse-upon the wall. Yet it was merely true. A voice seemed to have less suggestivity. And she gave way, he might do as he would.

spoken it to her so clearly, that for the moment she believed His licentiousness was repulsively attractive. But he was self-in inspiration.

responsible, she would see what it was.

'It is really true,' she said to herself again.

They might do as they liked—this she realised as she went She knew quite well she had believed it all along. She knew to sleep. How could anything that gave one satisfaction be it implicitly. But she must keep it dark—almost from herself.

excluded? What was degrading? Who cared? Degrading She must keep it completely secret. It was knowledge for her things were real, with a different reality. And he was so un-alone, and scarcely even to be admitted to herself.

abashed and unrestrained. Wasn't it rather horrible, a man The deep resolve formed in her, to combat him. One of who could be so soulful and spiritual, now to be so—she balked them must triumph over the other. Which should it be? Her at her own thoughts and memories: then she added—so bes-soul steeled itself with strength. Almost she laughed within tial? So bestial, they

two!—so degraded! She winced. But af-herself, at her confidence. It woke a certain keen, half conter all, why not? She exulted as well. Why not be bestial, and temptuous pity, tenderness for him: she was so ruthless.

go the whole round of experience? She exulted in it. She was Everybody retired early. The Professor and Loerke went

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into a small lounge to drink. They both watched Gudrun go she felt he was getting power over her.

along the landing by the railing upstairs.

'Well, I can't tell you already,' she said.

'Ein schones Frauenzimmer,' said the Professor.

She went to the mirror to take out the hairpins from her

'Ja!' asserted Loerke, shortly.

hair. She stood before the mirror every night for some min-Gerald walked with his queer, long wolf-steps across the utes, brushing her fine dark hair. It was part of the inevitable bedroom to the window, stooped and looked out, then rose ritual of her life.

again, and turned to Gudrun, his eyes sharp with an abstract He followed her, and stood behind her. She was busy with smile. He seemed very tall to her, she saw the glisten of his bent head, taking out the pins and shaking her warm hair whitish eyebrows, that met between his brows.

loose. When she looked up, she saw him in the glass standing

'How do you like it?' he said.

behind her, watching unconsciously, not consciously seeing He seemed to be laughing inside himself, quite uncon-her, and yet watching, with finepupilled eyes that SEEMED

sciously. She looked at him. He was a phenomenon to her, not to smile, and which were not really smiling.

a human being: a sort of creature, greedy.

She started. It took all her courage for her to continue

'I like it very much,' she replied.

brushing her hair, as usual, for her to pretend she was at her

'Who do you like best downstairs?' he asked, standing tall ease. She was far, far from being at her ease with him. She and glistening above her, with his glistening stiff hair erect.

beat her brains wildly for something to say to him.

'Who do I like best?' she repeated, wanting to answer his

'What are your plans for tomorrow?' she asked question, and finding it difficult to collect herself. 'Why I nonchalantly, whilst her heart was beating so furiously, her don't know, I don't know enough about them yet, to be able eyes were so bright with strange nervousness, she felt he could to say. Who do YOU like best?'

not but observe. But she knew also that he was completely

'Oh, I don't care—I don't like or dislike any of them. It blind, blind as a wolf looking at her. It was a strange battle doesn't matter about me. I wanted to know about you.'

between her ordinary consciousness and his uncanny, black-

'But why?' she asked, going rather pale. The abstract, un-art consciousness.

conscious smile in his eyes was intensified.

'I don't know,' he replied, 'what would you like to do?'

'I wanted to know,' he said.

He spoke emptily, his mind was sunk away.

She turned aside, breaking the spell. In some strange way,

'Oh,' she said, with easy protestation, 'I'm ready for any-

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thing—anything will be fine for ME, I'm sure.'

she said, in a full, resonant, nonchalant voice, that was forced And to herself she was saying: 'God, why am I so ner-out with all her remaining self-control:

vous—why are you so nervous, you fool. If he sees it I'm done

'Oh, would you mind looking in that bag behind there for forever—you KNOW you're done for forever, if he sees and giving me my—'

the absurd state you're in.'

Here her power fell inert. 'My what—my what—?' she And she smiled to herself as if it were all child's play.

screamed in silence to herself.

Meanwhile her heart was plunging, she was almost fainting.

But he had started round, surprised and startled that she She could see him, in the mirror, as he stood there behind her, should ask him to look in her bag, which she always kept so tall and over-arching—blond and terribly frightening. She VERY private to herself.

glanced at his reflection with furtive eyes, willing to give any-She turned now, her face white, her dark eyes blazing with thing to save him from knowing she could see him. He did uncanny, overwrought excitement. She saw him stooping to not know she could see his reflection. He was looking uncon-the bag, undoing the loosely buckled strap, unattentive.

sciously, glisteningly down at her head, from which the hair

'Your what?' he asked.

fell loose, as she brushed it with wild, nervous hand. She held

'Oh, a little enamel box—yellow—with a design of a cor-her head aside and brushed and brushed her hair madly. For morant plucking her breast—'

her life, she could not turn round and face him. For her life, She went towards him, stooping her beautiful, bare arm, SHE COULD NOT. And the knowledge made her almost and deftly turned some of her things, disclosing the box, which sink to the ground in a faint, helpless, spent. She was aware of was exquisitely painted.

his frightening, impending figure standing close behind her,

'That is it, see,' she said, taking it from under his eyes.

she was aware of his hard, strong, unyielding chest, close upon And he was baffled now. He was left to fasten up the bag, her back. And she felt she could not bear it any more, in a few whilst she swiftly did up her hair for the night, and sat down minutes she would fall down at his feet, grovelling at his feet, to unfasten her shoes. She would not turn her back to him and letting him destroy her.

any more.

The thought pricked up all her sharp intelligence and pres-He was baffled, frustrated, but unconscious. She had the ence of mind. She dared not turn round to him—and there whip hand over him now. She knew he had not realised her he stood motionless, unbroken. Summoning all her strength, terrible panic. Her heart was beating heavily still. Fool, fool **Contents**



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that she was, to get into such a state! How she thanked God Her mockery quivered through his muscles with curious for Gerald's obtuse blindness. Thank God he could see noth-re-echoes. When he slept he seemed to crouch down in the ing.

bed, lapped up in his own strength, that yet was hollow.

She sat slowly unlacing her shoes, and he too commenced And Gudrun slept strongly, a victorious sleep. Suddenly, to undress. Thank God that crisis was over. She felt almost she was almost fiercely awake. The small timber room glowed fond of him now, almost in love with him.

with the dawn, that came upwards from the low window. She

'Ah, Gerald,' she laughed, caressively, teasingly, 'Ah, what a could see down the valley when she lifted her head: the snow fine game you played with the Professor's daughter—didn't with a pinkish, half-revealed magic, the fringe of pine-trees at you now?'

the bottom of the slope. And one tiny figure moved over the

'What game?' he asked, looking round.

vaguely-illuminated space.

'ISN'T she in love with you—oh DEAR, isn't she in love She glanced at his watch; it was seven o'clock. He was still with you!' said Gudrun, in her gayest, most attractive mood.

completely asleep. And she was so hard awake, it was almost

'I shouldn't think so,' he said.

frightening—a hard, metallic wakefulness. She lay looking at

'Shouldn't think so!' she teased. 'Why the poor girl is ly-him.

ing at this moment overwhelmed, dying with love for you.

He slept in the subjection of his own health and defeat.

She thinks you're WONDERFUL—oh marvellous, beyond She was overcome by a sincere regard for him. Till now, she what man has ever been. REALLY, isn't it funny?'

was afraid before him. She lay and thought about him, what

'Why funny, what is funny?' he asked.

he was, what he represented in the world. A fine, indepen-

'Why to see you working it on her,' she said, with a half dent will, he had. She thought of the revolution he had worked reproach that confused the male conceit in him. 'Really Gerald, in the mines, in so short a time. She knew that, if he were the poor girl—!'

confronted with any problem, any hard actual difficulty, he

'I did nothing to her,' he said.

would overcome it. If he laid hold of any idea, he would carry

'Oh, it was too shameful, the way you simply swept her it through. He had the faculty of making order out of confu-off her feet.'

sion. Only let him grip hold of a situation, and he would

'That was Schuhplatteln,' he replied, with a bright grin.

bring to pass an inevitable conclusion.

'Ha—ha—ha!' laughed Gudrun.

For a few moments she was borne away on the wild wings

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of ambition. Gerald, with his force of will and his power for the last flavour of everything was ironical. When she felt her comprehending the actual world, should be set to solve the pang of undeniable reality, this was when she knew the hard problems of the day, the problem of industrialism in the irony of hopes and ideas.

modern world. She knew he would, in the course of time, She lay and looked at him, as he slept. He was sheerly effect the changes he desired, he could reorganise the indus-beautiful, he was a perfect instrument. To her mind, he was a trial system. She knew he could do it. As an instrument, in pure, inhuman, almost superhuman instrument. His instru-these things, he was marvellous, she had never seen any man mentality appealed so strongly to her, she wished she were with his potentiality. He was unaware of it, but she knew.

God, to use him as a tool.

He only needed to be hitched on, he needed that his hand And at the same instant, came the ironical question: 'What should be set to the task, because he was so unconscious. And for?' She thought of the colliers' wives, with their linoleum this she could do. She would marry him, he would go into and their lace curtains and their little girls in high-laced boots.

Parliament in the Conservative interest, he would clear up She thought of the wives and daughters of the pit-managers, the great muddle of labour and industry. He was so superbly their tennis-parties, and their terrible struggles to be superior fearless, masterful, he knew that every problem could be worked each to the other, in the social scale. There was Shortlands out, in life as in geometry. And he would care neither about with its meaningless distinction, the meaningless crowd of himself nor about anything but the pure working out of the the Criches. There was London, the House of Commons, the problem. He was very pure, really.

extant social world. My God!

Her heart beat fast, she flew away on wings of elation, Young as she was,

Gudrun had touched the whole pulse of imagining a future. He would be a Napoleon of peace, or a social England. She had no ideas of rising in the world. She Bismarck—and she the woman behind him. She had read knew, with the perfect cynicism of cruel youth, that to rise in Bismarck's letters, and had been deeply moved by them. And the world meant to have one outside show instead of another, Gerald would be freer, more dauntless than Bismarck.

the advance was like having a spurious half-crown instead of a But even as she lay in fictitious transport, bathed in the spurious penny. The whole coinage of valuation was spurious.

strange, false sunshine of hope in life, something seemed to Yet of course, her cynicism knew well enough that, in a world snap in her, and a terrible cynicism began to gain upon her, where spurious coin was current, a bad sovereign was better blowing in like a wind. Everything turned to irony with her: than a bad farthing. But rich and poor, she despised both **Contents**



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alike.

That's all it is, Gerald, my young hero. At any rate we'll Already she mocked at herself for her dreams. They could spare ourselves the nausea of stirring the old broth any more.

be fulfilled easily enough. But she recognised too well, in her You be beautiful, my Gerald, and reckless. There ARE per-spirit, the mockery of her

own impulses. What did she care, fect moments. Wake up, Gerald, wake up, convince me of the that Gerald had created a richly-paying industry out of an perfect moments. Oh, convince me, I need it.

old worn-out concern? What did she care? The worn-out He opened his eyes, and looked at her. She greeted him concern and the rapid, splendidly organised industry, they with a mocking, enigmatic smile in which was a poignant were bad money. Yet of course, she cared a great deal, out-gaiety. Over his face went the reflection of the smile, he smiled, wardly—and outwardly was all that mattered, for inwardly too, purely unconsciously.

was a bad joke.

That filled her with extraordinary delight, to see the smile Everything was intrinsically a piece of irony to her. She cross his face, reflected from her face. She remembered that leaned over Gerald and said in her heart, with compassion: was how a baby smiled. It filled her with extraordinary radi-

'Oh, my dear, my dear, the game isn't worth even you. You ant delight.

are a fine thing really—why should you be used on such a

'You've done it,' she said.

poor show!'

'What?' he asked, dazed.

Her heart was breaking with pity and grief for him. And

'Convinced me.'

at the same moment, a grimace came over her mouth, of mock-And she bent down, kissing him passionately, passionately, ing irony at her own unspoken tirade. Ah, what a farce it was!

so that he was bewildered. He did not ask her of what he had She thought of Parnell and Katherine O'Shea. Parnell! After convinced her, though he meant to. He was glad she was kiss-all, who can take the nationalisation of Ireland

seriously? Who ing him. She seemed to be feeling for his very heart to touch can take political Ireland really seriously, whatever it does?

the quick of him. And he wanted her to touch the quick of And who can take political England seriously? Who can?

his being, he wanted that most of all.

Who can care a straw, really, how the old patched-up Consti-Outside, somebody was singing, in a manly, reckless hand-tution is tinkered at any more? Who cares a button for our some voice:

national ideas, any more than for our national bowler hat?

Aha, it is all old hat, it is all old bowler hat!

'Mach mir auf, mach mir auf, du Stolze,

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Mach mir ein Feuer von Holze.

She held on to him as they went sheering down over the Vom Regen bin ich nass

keen slope. She felt as if her senses were being whetted on Vom Regen bin ich nass-'

some fine grindstone, that was keen as flame. The snow sprinted Gudrun knew that that song would sound through her on either side, like sparks from a blade that is being sharp-eternity, sung in a manly, reckless, mocking voice. It marked ened, the whiteness round about ran swifter, swifter, in pure one of her supreme moments, the supreme pangs of her ner-flame the white slope flew against her, and she fused like one vous gratification. There it was, fixed in eternity for her.

molten, dancing globule, rushed through a white intensity.

The day came fine and bluish. There was a light wind Then there was a great swerve at the bottom, when they swung blowing among the mountain tops, keen as a rapier where it as it were in a fall to earth, in the diminishing motion.

touched, carrying with it a fine dust of snow-powder. Gerald They came to rest. But when she rose to her feet, she could went out with the fine, blind face of a man who is in his state not stand. She gave a strange cry, turned and clung to him, of fulfilment. Gudrun and he were in perfect static unity this sinking her face on his breast, fainting in him. Utter oblivion morning, but unseeing and unwitting. They went out with a came over her, as she lay for a few moments abandoned against toboggan, leaving Ursula and Birkin to follow.

him.

Gudrun was all scarlet and royal blue—a scarlet jersey and

'What is it?' he was saying. 'Was it too much for you?'

cap, and a royal blue skirt and stockings. She went gaily over But she heard nothing.

the white snow, with Gerald beside her, in white and grey, When she came to, she stood up and looked round, aston-pulling the little toboggan. They grew small in the distance ished. Her face was white, her eyes brilliant and large.

of snow, climbing the steep slope.

'What is it?' he repeated. 'Did it upset you?'

For Gudrun herself, she seemed to pass altogether into She looked at him with her brilliant eyes that seemed to the whiteness of the snow, she became a pure, thoughtless have undergone some transfiguration, and she laughed, with crystal. When she reached the top of the slope, in the wind, a terrible merriment.

she looked round, and saw peak beyond peak of rock and snow,

'No,' she cried, with triumphant joy. 'It was the complete bluish, transcendent in heaven. And it seemed to her like a moment of my life.'

garden, with the peaks for pure flowers, and her heart gather-And she looked at him with her dazzling, overweening ing them. She had no separate consciousness for Gerald.

laughter, like one possessed. A fine blade seemed to enter his

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heart, but he did not care, or take any notice.

indoors: otherwise Birkin said, they would all lose their fac-But they climbed

up the slope again, and they flew down ulties, and begin to utter themselves in cries and shrieks, like through the white flame again, splendidly, splendidly. Gudrun some strange, unknown species of snow-creatures.

was laughing and flashing, powdered with snow-crystals, It happened in the afternoon that Ursula sat in the Gerald worked perfectly. He felt he could guide the tobog-Reunionsaal talking to Loerke. The latter had seemed un-gan to a hair-breadth, almost he could make it pierce into the happy lately. He was lively and full of mischievous humour, air and right into the very heart of the sky. It seemed to him as usual.

the flying sledge was but his strength spread out, he had but But Ursula had thought he was sulky about something.

to move his arms, the motion was his own. They explored the His partner, too, the big, fair, goodlooking youth, was ill at great slopes, to find another slide. He felt there must be some-ease, going about as if he belonged to nowhere, and was kept thing better than they had known. And he found what he in some sort of subjection, against which he was rebelling.

desired, a perfect long, fierce sweep, sheering past the foot of Loerke had hardly talked to Gudrun. His associate, on the a rock and into the trees at the base. It was dangerous, he other hand, had paid her constantly a soft, over-deferential knew. But then he knew also he would direct the sledge beattention. Gudrun wanted to talk to Loerke. He was a sculp-tween his fingers.

tor, and she wanted to hear his view of his art. And his figure The first days passed in an ecstasy of physical motion, attracted her. There was the look of a little wastrel about him, sleighing, skiing, skating, moving in an intensity of speed and that intrigued her, and an old man's look, that interested her, white light that surpassed life itself, and carried the souls of and then, beside this, an uncanny singleness, a quality of be-the human beings beyond into an inhuman abstraction of ing by himself, not in contact with anybody else, that marked velocity and weight and eternal, frozen snow.

out an artist to her. He was a chatterer, a magpie, a maker of Gerald's eyes became hard and strange, and as he went by mischievous word-jokes, that were sometimes very clever, but on his skis he was more like some powerful, fateful sigh than which often were not. And she could see in his brown, gnome's a man, his muscles elastic in a perfect, soaring trajectory, his eyes, the black look of inorganic misery, which lay behind all body projected in pure flight, mindless, soulless, whirling along his small buffoonery.

one perfect line of force.

His figure interested her—the figure of a boy, almost a Luckily there came a day of snow, when they must all stay street arab. He made no attempt to conceal it. He always wore

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a simple loden suit, with knee breeches. His legs were thin, ever Gudrun had tried to talk to him he had shied away un-and he made no attempt to disguise the fact: which was of responsive, looking at her with his watchful dark eyes, but itself remarkable, in a German. And he never ingratiated him-entering into no relation with her. He had made her feel that self anywhere, not in the slightest, but kept to himself, for all her slow French and her slower German, were hateful to him.

his apparent playfulness.

As for his own inadequate English, he was much too awk-Leitner, his companion, was a great sportsman, very hand-ward to try it at all. But he understood a good deal of what some with his big limbs and his blue eyes.

Loerke would go was said, nevertheless. And Gudrun, piqued, left him alone.

toboganning or skating, in little snatches, but he was indif-This afternoon, however, she came into the lounge as he ferent. And his fine, thin nostrils, the nostrils of a purebred was talking to Ursula. His fine, black hair somehow reminded street arab, would quiver with contempt at Leitner's her of a bat, thin as it was on his full, sensitive-looking head, splothering gymnastic displays. It was evident that the two and worn away at the temples. He sat hunched up, as if his men who had travelled and lived together, sharing the same spirit were bat-like. And Gudrun could see he was making bedroom, had now reached the stage of loathing. Leitner hated some slow confidence to Ursula, unwilling, a slow, grudging, Loerke with an injured, writhing, impotent hatred, and Loerke scanty self-revelation. She went and sat by her sister.

treated Leitner with a fine-quivering contempt and sarcasm.

He looked at her, then looked away again, as if he took no Soon the two would have to go apart.

notice of her. But as a matter of fact, she interested him deeply.

Already they were rarely together. Leitner ran attaching

'Isn't it interesting, Prune,' said Ursula, turning to her sis-himself to somebody or other, always deferring, Loerke was a ter, 'Herr Loerke is doing a great frieze for a factory in Co-good deal alone. Out of doors he wore a Westphalian cap, a logne, for the outside, the street.'

close brown-velvet head with big brown velvet flaps down She looked at him, at his thin, brown, nervous hands, that over his ears, so that he looked like a lop-eared rabbit, or a were prehensile, and somehow like talons, like 'griffes,' inhu-troll. His face was brown-red, with a dry, bright skin, that man.

seemed to crinkle with his mobile expressions. His eyes were

'What IN?' she asked.

arresting—brown, full, like a rabbit's, or like a troll's, or like

'AUS WAS?' repeated Ursula.

the eyes of a lost being, having a strange, dumb, depraved

'GRANIT,' he replied.

look of knowledge, and a quick spark of uncanny fire. When-It had become immediately a laconic series of question

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and answer between fellow craftsmen.

Ursula pondered.

'What is the relief?' asked Gudrun.

'I suppose,' she said, 'there is no NEED for our great works

'Alto relievo.'

to be so hideous.'

'And at what height?'

Instantly he broke into motion.

It was very interesting to Gudrun to think of his making

'There you are!' he cried, 'there you are! There is not only the great granite frieze for a great granite factory in Cologne.

NO NEED for our places of work to be ugly, but their ugli-She got from him some notion of the design. It was a repre-ness ruins the work, in the end. Men will not go on submit-sentation of a fair, with peasants and artisans in an orgy of ting to such intolerable ugliness. In the end it will hurt too enjoyment, drunk and absurd in their modern dress, whirling much, and they will wither because of it. And this will wither ridiculously in roundabouts, gaping at shows, kissing and stag-the WORK as well. They will think the work itself is ugly: gering and rolling in knots, swinging in swing-boats, and fir-the machines, the very act of labour. Whereas the machinery ing down shooting galleries, a frenzy of chaotic motion.

and the acts of labour are extremely, maddeningly beautiful.

There was a swift discussion of technicalities. Gudrun was But this will be the end of our civilisation, when people will very much impressed.

not work because work has become so intolerable to their

'But how wonderful, to have such a factory!' cried Ursula.

senses, it nauseates them too much, they would rather starve.

'Is the whole building fine?'

THEN we shall see the hammer used only for smashing, then

'Oh yes,' he replied. 'The frieze is part of the whole archi-we shall see it. Yet here we are—we have the opportunity to tecture. Yes, it is a colossal thing.'

make beautiful factories, beautiful machine-houses—we have Then he seemed to stiffen, shrugged his shoulders, and the opportunity—'

went on:

Gudrun could only partly understand. She could have

'Sculpture and architecture must go together. The day for cried with vexation.

irrelevant statues, as for wall pictures, is over. As a matter of

'What does he say?' she asked Ursula. And Ursula trans-fact sculpture is always part of an architectural conception.

lated, stammering and brief. Loerke watched Gudrun's face, And since churches are all museum stuff, since industry is to see her judgment.

our business, now, then let us make our places of industry our

'And do you think then,' said Gudrun, 'that art should art—our factory-area our Parthenon, ECCO!'

serve industry?'

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'Art should INTERPRET industry, as art once interpreted He paused, looked at her steadily, then dropped the sub-religion,' he said.

ject entirely. She seemed to him to be trifling.

'But does your fair interpret industry?' she asked him.

'But have YOU ever worked as the world works?' Ursula

'Certainly. What is man doing, when he is at a fair like asked him.

this? He is fulfilling the counterpart of labour—the machine He looked at her untrustful.

works him, instead of he the machine. He enjoys the me-

'Yes,' he replied, with a surly bark. 'I have known what it chanical motion, in his own body.'

was to lie in bed for three days, because I had nothing to eat.'

'But is there nothing but work—mechanical work?' said Gudrun was looking at him with large, grave eyes, that Gudrun.

seemed to draw the confession from him as the marrow from

'Nothing but work!' he repeated, leaning forward, his eyes his bones. All his nature held him back from confessing. And two darknesses, with needle-points of light. 'No, it is nothing yet her large, grave eyes upon him seemed to open some valve but this, serving a machine, or enjoying the motion of a ma-in his veins, and involuntarily he was telling.

chine—motion, that is all. You have never worked for hunger,

'My father was a man who did not like work, and we had or you would know what god governs us.'

no mother. We lived in Austria, Polish Austria. How did we Gudrun quivered and flushed. For some reason she was live? Ha!—somehow! Mostly in a room with three other fami-almost in tears.

lies—one set in each corner—and the W.C. in the middle of

'No, I have not worked for hunger,' she replied, 'but I have the room—a pan

with a plank on it—ha! I had two brothers worked!'

and a sister—and there might be a woman with my father.

'Travaille—lavorato?' he asked. 'E che lavoro—che lavoro?

He was a free being, in his way—would fight with any man Quel travail estce que vous avez fait?'

in the town—a garrison town—and was a little man too. But He broke into a mixture of Italian and French, instinc-he wouldn't work for anybody—set his heart against it, and tively using a foreign language when he spoke to her.

wouldn't.'

'You have never worked as the world works,' he said to her,

'And how did you live then?' asked Ursula.

with sarcasm.

He looked at her—then, suddenly, at Gudrun.

'Yes,' she said. 'I have. And I do—I work now for my daily

'Do you understand?' he asked.

bread.'

'Enough,' she replied.

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Their eyes met for a moment. Then he looked away. He

'WIE ALT?' he repeated. And he hesitated. It was evi-would say no more.

dently one of his reticencies.

'And how did you become a sculptor?' asked Ursula.

'How old are YOU?' he replied, without answering.

'How did I become a sculptor—' he paused. 'Dunque—'

'I am twenty-six,' she answered.

he resumed, in a changed manner, and beginning to speak

'Twenty-six,' he repeated, looking into her eyes. He paused.

French—'I became old enough—I used to steal from the Then he said:

market-place. Later I went to work—imprinted the stamp on

'UND IHR HERR GEMAHL, WIE ALT IS ER?'

clay bottles, before they were baked. It was an earthenware-

'Who?' asked Gudrun.

bottle factory. There I began making models. One day, I had

'Your husband,' said Ursula, with a certain irony.

had enough. I lay in the sun and did not go to work. Then I

'I haven't got a husband,' said Gudrun in English. In Ger-walked to Munich—then I walked to Italy—begging, beg-man she answered,

ging everything.'

'He is thirty-one.'

'The Italians were very good to me—they were good and But Loerke was watching closely, with his uncanny, full, honourable to me. From Bozen to Rome, almost every night suspicious eyes. Something in Gudrun seemed to accord with I had a meal and a bed, perhaps of straw, with some peasant.

him. He was really like one of the 'little people' who have no I love the Italian people, with all my heart.

soul, who has found his mate in a human being. But he suf-

'Dunque, adesso—maintenant—I earn a thousand pounds fered in his discovery. She too was fascinated by him, fasci-in a year, or I earn two thousand—'

nated, as if some strange creature, a rabbit or a bat, or a brown He looked down at the ground, his voice tailing off into seal, had begun to talk to her. But also, she knew what he was silence.

unconscious of, his tremendous power of understanding, of Gudrun looked at his fine, thin, shiny skin, reddish-brown apprehending her living motion. He did not know his own from the sun, drawn tight over his full temples; and at his power. He did not know how, with his full, submerged, watch-thin hair—and at the thick, coarse, brush-like moustache, cut ful eyes, he could look into her and see her, what she was, see short about his mobile, rather shapeless mouth.

her secrets. He would only want her to be herself—he knew

'How old are you?' she asked.

her verily, with a subconscious, sinister knowledge, devoid of He looked up at her with his full, elfin eyes startled.

illusions and hopes.

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To Gudrun, there was in Loerke the rock-bottom of all Gerald looked up in surprise.

life. Everybody else had their illusion, must have their illu-

'DOES he make an appeal to them?' he asked.

sion, their before and after. But he, with a perfect stoicism,

'Oh yes,' replied Birkin. 'He is the perfectly subjected be-did without any before and after, dispensed with all illusion.

ing, existing almost like a criminal. And the women rush to-He did not deceive himself in the last issue. In the last issue wards that, like a current of air towards a vacuum.'

he cared about nothing, he was troubled about nothing, he

'Funny they should rush to that,' said Gerald.

made not the slightest attempt to be at one with anything.

'Makes one mad, too,' said Birkin. 'But he has the fascina-He existed a pure, unconnected will, stoical and tion of pity and repulsion for them, a little obscene monster momentaneous. There was only his work.

of the darkness that he is.'

It was curious too, how his poverty, the degradation of his Gerald stood still, suspended in thought.

earlier life, attracted her. There was something insipid and

'What DO women want, at the bottom?' he asked.

tasteless to her, in the idea of a gentleman, a man who had Birkin shrugged his shoulders.

gone the usual course through school and university. A cer-

'God knows,' he said. 'Some satisfaction in basic repul-tain violent sympathy, however, came up in her for this mud-sion, it seems to me. They seem to creep down some ghastly child. He seemed to be the very stuff of the underworld of tunnel of darkness, and will never be satisfied till they've come life. There was no going beyond him.

to the end.'

Ursula too was attracted by Loerke. In both sisters he com-Gerald looked out into the mist of fine snow that was manded a certain homage. But there were moments when to blowing by. Everywhere was blind today, horribly blind.

Ursula he seemed indescribably inferior, false, a vulgarism.

'And what is the end?' he asked.

Both Birkin and Gerald disliked him, Gerald ignoring him Birkin shook his head.

with some contempt, Birkin exasperated.

'I've not got there yet, so I don't know. Ask Loerke, he's

'What do the women find so impressive in that little brat?'

pretty near. He is a good many stages further than either you Gerald asked. or I can go.'

'God alone knows,' replied Birkin, 'unless it's some sort of

'Yes, but stages further in what?' cried Gerald, irritated.

appeal he makes to them, which flatters them and has such a Birkin sighed, and gathered his brows into a knot of an-power over them.'

ger.

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'Stages further in social hatred,' he said. 'He lives like a rat,

'Not now,' he replied. 'I have done all sorts—except por-in the river of corruption, just where it falls over into the traits—I never did portraits. But other things—'

bottomless pit. He's further on than we are. He hates the

'What kind of things?' asked Gudrun.

ideal more acutely. He HATES the ideal utterly, yet it still He paused a moment, then rose, and went out of the room.

dominates him. I expect he is a Jew—or part Jewish.'

He returned almost immediately with a little roll of paper,

'Probably,' said Gerald.

which he handed to her. She unrolled it. It was a photogra-

'He is a gnawing little negation, gnawing at the roots of vure reproduction of a statuette, signed F. Loerke.

life.'

'That is quite an early thing—NOT mechanical,' he said,

'But why does anybody care about him?' cried Gerald.

'more popular.'

'Because they hate the ideal also, in their souls. They want The statuette was of a naked girl, small, finely made, sit-to explore the sewers, and he's the wizard rat that swims ahead.'

ting on a great naked horse. The girl was young and tender, a Still Gerald stood and stared at the blind haze of snow mere bud. She was sitting sideways on the horse, her face in outside.

her hands, as if in shame and grief, in a little abandon. Her

'I don't understand your terms, really,' he said, in a flat, hair, which was short and must be flaxen, fell forward, di-doomed voice. 'But it sounds a rum sort of desire.'

vided, half covering her hands.

'I suppose we want the same,' said Birkin. 'Only we want Her limbs were young and tender. Her legs, scarcely formed to take a quick jump downwards, in a sort of ecstasy—and he yet, the legs of a maiden just passing towards cruel woman-ebbs with the stream, the sewer stream.'

hood, dangled childishly over the side of the powerful horse, Meanwhile Gudrun and Ursula waited for the next op-pathetically, the small feet folded one over the other, as if to portunity to talk to Loerke. It was no use beginning when the hide. But there was no hiding. There she was exposed naked men were there. Then they could get into no touch with the on the naked flank of the horse.

isolated little sculptor. He had to be alone with them. And he The horse stood stock still, stretched in a kind of start. It preferred Ursula to be there, as a sort of transmitter to was a massive, magnificent stallion, rigid with pent-up power.

Gudrun.

Its neck was arched and terrible, like a sickle, its flanks were

'Do you do nothing but architectural sculpture?' Gudrun pressed back, rigid with power.

asked him one evening.

Gudrun went pale, and a darkness came over her eyes, like

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shame, she looked up with a certain supplication, almost slave-He raised his shoulders, spread his hands in a shrug of like. He glanced at her, and jerked his head a little.

slow indifference, as much as to inform her she was an ama-

'How big is it?' she asked, in a toneless voice, persisting in teur and an impertinent nobody.

appearing casual and unaffected.

'Wissen Sie,' he said, with an insulting patience and con-

'How big?' he replied, glancing again at her. 'Without descension in his voice, 'that horse is a certain FORM, part of pedestal—so high—' he measured with his hand—'with ped-a whole form. It is part of a work of art, a piece of form. It is estal, so—'

not a picture of a friendly horse to which you give a lump of He looked at her steadily. There was a little brusque, tur-sugar, do you see—it is part of a work of art, it has no relation gid contempt for her in his swift gesture, and she seemed to to anything outside that work of art.'

cringe a little.

Ursula, angry at being treated quite so insultingly DE

'And what is it done in?' she asked, throwing back her head HAUT EN BAS, from the height of esoteric art to the depth and looking at him with affected coldness.

of general exoteric amateurism, replied, hotly, flushing and He still gazed at her steadily, and his dominance was not lifting her face.

shaken.

'But it IS a picture of a horse, nevertheless.'

'Bronze—green bronze.'

He lifted his shoulders in another shrug.

'Green bronze!' repeated Gudrun, coldly accepting his

'As you like—it is not a picture of a cow, certainly.'

challenge. She was thinking of the slender, immature, tender Here Gudrun broke in, flushed and brilliant, anxious to limbs of the girl, smooth and cold in green bronze.

avoid any more of this, any more of Ursula's foolish persis-

'Yes, beautiful,' she murmured, looking up at him with a tence in giving herself away.

certain dark homage.

'What do you mean by "it is a picture of a horse?"' she He closed his eyes and looked aside, triumphant.

cried at her sister. 'What do you mean by a horse? You mean

'Why,' said Ursula, 'did you make the horse so stiff? It is an idea you have in YOUR head, and which you want to see as stiff as a block.'

represented. There is another idea altogether, quite another

'Stiff?' he repeated, in arms at once.

idea. Call it a horse if you like, or say it is not a horse. I have

'Yes. LOOK how stock and stupid and brutal it is. Horses just as much right to say that YOUR horse isn't a horse, that are sensitive, quite delicate and sensitive, really.'

it is a falsity of your own make-up.'

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Ursula wavered, baffled. Then her words came.

'It isn't a word of it true, of all this harangue you have

'But why does he have this idea of a horse?' she said. 'I made me,' she replied flatly. 'The horse is a picture of your know it is his idea. I know it is a picture of himself, really—'

own stock, stupid brutality, and the girl was a girl you loved Loerke snorted with rage.

and tortured and then ignored.'

'A picture of myself!' he repeated, in derision. 'Wissen sie, He looked up at her with a small smile of contempt in his gnadige Frau, that is a Kunstwerk, a work of art. It is a work eyes. He would not trouble to answer this last charge.

of art, it is a picture of nothing, of absolutely nothing. It has Gudrun too was silent in exasperated contempt. Ursula nothing to do with anything but itself, it has no relation with WAS such an insufferable outsider, rushing in where angels the everyday world of this and other, there is no connection would fear to tread. But then—fools must be suffered, if not between them, absolutely

none, they are two different and gladly.

distinct planes of existence, and to translate one into the other But Ursula was persistent too.

is worse than foolish, it is a darkening of all counsel, a making

'As for your world of art and your world of reality,' she confusion everywhere. Do you see, you MUST NOT con-replied, 'you have to separate the two, because you can't bear fuse the relative work of action, with the absolute world of to know what you are. You can't bear to realise what a stock, art. That you MUST NOT DO.'

stiff, hide-bound brutality you ARE really, so you say "it's

'That is quite true,' cried Gudrun, let loose in a sort of the world of art." The world of art is only the truth about the rhapsody. 'The two things are quite and permanently apart, real world, that's all—but you are too far gone to see it.'

they have NOTHING to do with one another. I and my art, She was white and trembling, intent. Gudrun and Loerke they have nothing to do with each other. My art stands in sat in stiff dislike of her. Gerald too, who had come up in the another world, I am in this world.'

beginning of the speech, stood looking at her in complete Her face was flushed and transfigured. Loerke who was disapproval and opposition. He felt she was undignified, she sitting with his head ducked, like some creature at bay, looked put a sort of vulgarity over the esotericism which gave man up at her, swiftly, almost furtively, and murmured, his last distinction. He joined his forces with the other two.

'Ja—so ist es, so ist es.'

They all three wanted her to go away. But she sat on in si-Ursula was silent after this outburst. She was furious. She lence, her soul weeping, throbbing violently, her fingers twist-wanted to poke a hole into them both.

ing her handkerchief.

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The others maintained a dead silence, letting the display humouredly. 'She was the middle-aged wife of some Earl or of Ursula's obtrusiveness pass by. Then Gudrun asked, in a other, who covered herself with her long hair.'

voice that was quite cool and casual, as if resuming a casual

'A la Maud Allan,' said Gudrun with a mocking grimace.

conversation:

'Why Maud Allan?' he replied. 'Isn't it so? I always

'Was the girl a model?'

thought the legend was that.'

'Nein, sie war kein Modell. Sie war eine kleine

'Yes, Gerald dear, I'm quite SURE you've got the legend Malschulerin.'

perfectly.'

'An art-student!' replied Gudrun.

She was laughing at him, with a little, mock-caressive con-And how the situation revealed itself to her! She saw the tempt.

girl art-student, unformed and of pernicious recklessness, too

'To be sure, I'd rather see the woman than the hair,' he young, her straight flaxen hair cut short, hanging just into laughed in return.

her neck, curving inwards slightly, because it was rather thick;

'Wouldn't you just!' mocked Gudrun.

and Loerke, the well-known master-sculptor, and the girl, Ursula rose and went away, leaving the three together.

probably well-brought-up, and of good family, thinking her-Gudrun took the picture again from Gerald, and sat look-self so great to be his mistress. Oh how well she knew the ing at it closely.

common callousness of it all. Dresden, Paris, or London, what

'Of course,' she said, turning to tease Loerke now, 'you did it matter? She knew it.

UNDERSTOOD your little Malschulerin.'

'Where is she now?' Ursula asked.

He raised his eyebrows and his shoulders in a complacent Loerke raised his shoulders, to convey his complete igno-shrug.

rance and indifference.

'The little girl?' asked Gerald, pointing to the figure.

'That is already six years ago,' he said; 'she will be twenty-Gudrun was sitting with the picture in her lap. She looked three years old, no more good.'

up at Gerald, full into his eyes, so that he seemed to be blinded.

Gerald had picked up the picture and was looking at it. It

'DIDN'T he understand her!' she said to Gerald, in a attracted him also. He saw on the pedestal, that the piece was slightly mocking, humorous playfulness. 'You've only to look called 'Lady Godiva.'

at the feet—AREN'T they darling, so pretty and tender—

'But this isn't Lady Godiva,' he said, smiling good-oh, they're really wonderful, they are really—'

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She lifted her eyes slowly, with a hot, flaming look into for it—such a child.'

Loerke's eyes. His soul was filled with her burning recogni-A queer spasm went over Loerke's face.

tion, he seemed to grow more uppish and lordly.

'Yes,' he said. 'I don't like them any bigger, any older. Then Gerald looked at the small, sculptured feet. They were they are beautiful, at sixteen, seventeen, eighteen—after that, turned together, half covering each other in pathetic shyness they are no use to me.'

and fear. He looked at them a long time, fascinated. Then, in There was a

moment's pause.

some pain, he put the picture away from him. He felt full of

'Why not?' asked Gerald.

barrenness.

Loerke shrugged his shoulders.

'What was her name?' Gudrun asked Loerke.

'I don't find them interesting—or beautiful—they are no

'Annette von Weck,' Loerke replied reminiscent. 'Ja, sie good to me, for my work.'

war hubsch. She was pretty—but she was tiresome. She was a

'Do you mean to say a woman isn't beautiful after she is nuisance,—not for a minute would she keep still—not until twenty?' asked Gerald.

I'd slapped her hard and made her cry—then she'd sit for five

'For me, no. Before twenty, she is small and fresh and ten-minutes.'

der and slight. After that—let her be what she likes, she has He was thinking over the work, his work, the all impor-nothing for me. The Venus of Milo is a bourgeoise—so are tant to him.

they all.'

'Did you really slap her?' asked Gudrun, coolly.

'And you don't care for women at all after twenty?' asked He glanced back at her, reading her challenge.

Gerald.

'Yes, I did,' he said, nonchalant, 'harder than I have ever

'They are no good to me, they are of no use in my art,'

beat anything in my life. I had to, I had to. It was the only Loerke repeated impatiently. 'I don't find them beautiful.'

way I got the work done.'

'You are an epicure,' said Gerald, with a slight sarcastic Gudrun watched him with large, dark-filled eyes, for some laugh.

moments. She seemed to be considering his very soul. Then

'And what about men?' asked Gudrun suddenly.

she looked down, in silence.

'Yes, they are good at all ages,' replied Loerke. 'A man should

'Why did you have such a young Godiva then?' asked be big and powerful—whether he is old or young is of no Gerald. 'She is so small, besides, on the horse—not big enough account, so he has the size, something of massiveness and—

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and stupid form.'

'Do you?' he replied mildly.

Ursula went out alone into the world of pure, new snow.

She sat by him und put her arms round his neck. It sur-But the dazzling whiteness seemed to beat upon her till it prised her that he was so little surprised.

hurt her, she felt the cold was slowly strangling her soul. Her

'Don't YOU?' she asked troubled.

head felt dazed and numb.

'I hadn't thought about it,' he said. 'But I'm sure I do.'

Suddenly she wanted to go away. It occurred to her, like a She sat up, suddenly erect.

miracle, that she might go away into another world. She had

'I hate it,' she said. 'I hate the snow, and the unnaturalness felt so doomed up here in the eternal snow, as if there were no of it, the unnatural light it throws on everybody, the ghastly beyond.

glamour, the unnatural feelings it makes everybody have.'

Now suddenly, as by a miracle she remembered that away He lay still and laughed, meditating.

beyond, below her, lay the dark fruitful earth, that towards

'Well,' he said, 'we can go away—we can go tomorrow.

the south there were stretches of land dark with orange trees We'll go tomorrow to Verona, and find Romeo and Juliet, and cypress, grey with olives, that ilex trees lifted wonderful and sit in the amphitheatre—shall we?'

plumy tufts in shadow against a blue sky. Miracle of Suddenly she hid her face against his shoulder with per-miracles!—this utterly silent, frozen world of the mountain-plexity and shyness. He lay so untrammelled.

tops was not universal! One might leave it and have done

'Yes,' she said softly, filled with relief. She felt her soul had with it. One might go away.

new wings, now he was so uncaring. 'I shall love to be Romeo She wanted to realise the miracle at once. She wanted at and Juliet,' she said. 'My love!'

this instant to have done with the snow-world, the terrible,

'Though a fearfully cold wind blows in Verona,' he said, static ice-built mountain tops. She wanted to see the dark

'from out of the Alps. We shall have the smell of the snow in earth, to smell its earthy fecundity, to see the patient wintry our noses.'

vegetation, to feel the sunshine touch a response in the buds.

She sat up and looked at him.

She went back gladly to the house, full of hope. Birkin

'Are you glad to go?' she asked, troubled.

was reading, lying in bed.

His eyes were inscrutable and laughing. She hid her face

'Rupert,' she said, bursting in on him. 'I want to go away.'

against his neck, clinging close to him, pleading: He looked up at her slowly.

'Don't laugh at me—don't laugh at me.'

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'Why how's that?' he laughed, putting his arms round were never QUITE together, at the same moment, one was her.

always a little left out. Nevertheless she was glad in hope,

'Because I don't want to be laughed at,' she whispered.

glorious and free, full of life and liberty. And he was still and He laughed more, as he kissed her delicate, finely per-soft and patient, for the time.

fumed hair.

They made their preparations to leave the next day. First

'Do you love me?' she whispered, in wild seriousness.

they went to Gudrun's room, where she and Gerald were just

'Yes,' he answered, laughing.

dressed ready for the evening indoors.

Suddenly she lifted her mouth to be kissed. Her lips were

'Prune,' said Ursula, 'I think we shall go away tomorrow. I taut and quivering and strenuous, his were soft, deep and can't stand the snow any more. It hurts my skin and my soul.'

delicate. He waited a few moments in the kiss. Then a shade

'Does it really hurt your soul, Ursula?' asked Gudrun, in of sadness went over his soul.

some surprise. 'I can believe quite it hurts your skin—it is

'Your mouth is so hard,' he said, in faint reproach.

TERRIBLE. But I thought it was ADMIRABLE for the

'And yours is so soft and nice,' she said gladly.

soul.'

'But why do you always grip your lips?' he asked, regret-

'No, not for mine. It just injures it,' said Ursula.

ful.

'Really!' cried Gudrun.

'Never mind,' she said swiftly. 'It is my way.'

There was a silence in the room. And Ursula and Birkin She knew he loved her; she was sure of him. Yet she could could feel that Gudrun and Gerald were relieved by their not let go a certain hold over herself, she could not bear him going.

to question her. She gave herself up in delight to being loved

'You will go south?' said Gerald, a little ring of uneasiness by him. She knew that, in spite of his joy when she aban-in his voice.

doned herself, he was a little bit saddened too. She could give

'Yes,' said Birkin, turning away. There was a queer, inde-herself up to his activity. But she could not be herself, she finable hostility between the two

men, lately. Birkin was on DARED not come forth quite nakedly to his nakedness, aban-the whole dim and indifferent, drifting along in a dim, easy doning all adjustment, lapsing in pure faith with him. She flow, unnoticing and patient, since he came abroad, whilst abandoned herself to HIM, or she took hold of him and gath-Gerald on the other hand, was intense and gripped into white ered her joy of him. And she enjoyed him fully. But they light, agonistes. The two men revoked one another.

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Gerald and Gudrun were very kind to the two who were that you are going-away-forever, never-to-return, sort of departing, solicitous for their welfare as if they were two chil-thing?'

dren. Gudrun came to Ursula's bedroom with three pairs of

'Oh, we shall come back,' said Ursula. 'It isn't a question of the coloured stockings for which she was notorious, and she train-journeys.'

threw them on the bed. But these were thick silk stockings,

'Yes, I know. But spiritually, so to speak, you are going vermilion, cornflower blue, and grey, bought in Paris. The away from us all?'

grey ones were knitted, seamless and heavy. Ursula was in rap-Ursula quivered.

tures. She knew Gudrun must be feeling VERY loving, to

'I don't know a bit what is going to happen,' she said. 'I give away such treasures.

only know we are going somewhere.'

'I can't take them from you, Prune,' she cried. 'I can't pos-Gudrun waited. sibly deprive you of them—the jewels.'

'And you are glad?' she asked.

'AREN'T they jewels!' cried Gudrun, eyeing her gifts with Ursula meditated for a moment.

an envious eye. 'AREN'T they real lambs!'

'I believe I am VERY glad,' she replied.

'Yes, you MUST keep them,' said Ursula.

But Gudrun read the unconscious brightness on her sister's

'I don't WANT them, I've got three more pairs. I WANT

face, rather than the uncertain tones of her speech.

you to keep them—I want you to have them. They're yours,

'But don't you think you'll WANT the old connection there—'

with the world—father and the rest of us, and all that it means, And with trembling, excited hands she put the coveted England and the world of thought—don't you think you'll stockings under Ursula's pillow.

NEED that, really to make a world?'

'One gets the greatest joy of all out of really lovely stock-Ursula was silent,

trying to imagine.

ings,' said Ursula.

'I think,' she said at length, involuntarily, 'that Rupert is

'One does,' replied Gudrun; 'the greatest joy of all.'

right—one wants a new space to be in, and one falls away And she sat down in the chair. It was evident she had from the old.'

come for a last talk. Ursula, not knowing what she wanted, Gudrun watched her sister with impassive face and steady waited in silence.

eyes.

'Do you FEEL, Ursula,' Gudrun began, rather sceptically,

'One wants a new space to be in, I quite agree,' she said.

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'But I think that a new world is a development from this you mean that you can see to the end of what will happen, I world, and that to isolate oneself with one other person, isn't don't agree. I really can't agree. And anyhow, you can't sud-to find a new world at all, but only to secure oneself in one's denly fly off on to a new planet, because you think you can illusions.'

see to the end of this.'

Ursula looked out of the window. In her soul she began to Ursula suddenly straightened herself.

wrestle, and she was frightened. She was always frightened of

'Yes,' she said. 'Yes—one knows. One has no more connec-words, because she knew that mere word-force could always tions here. One has a sort of other self, that belongs to a new make her believe what she did not believe.

planet, not to this. You've got to hop off.'

'Perhaps,' she said, full of mistrust, of herself and every-Gudrun reflected for a few moments. Then a smile of ridi-body. 'But,' she added, 'I do think that one can't have any-cule, almost of contempt, came over her face.

thing new whilst one cares for the old—do you know what I

'And what will happen when you find yourself in space?'

mean?—even fighting the old is belonging to it. I know, one she cried in derision. 'After all, the great ideas of the world are is tempted to stop with the world, just to fight it. But then it the same there. You above everybody can't get away from the isn't worth it.'

fact that love, for instance, is the supreme thing, in space as Gudrun considered herself.

well as on earth.'

'Yes,' she said. 'In a way, one is of the world if one lives in

'No,' said Ursula, 'it isn't. Love is too human and little. I it. But isn't it really an illusion to think you can get out of it?

believe in something inhuman, of which love is only a little After all, a cottage in the Abruzzi, or wherever it may be, isn't part. I believe what we

must fulfil comes out of the unknown a new world. No, the only thing to do with the world, is to see to us, and it is something infinitely more than love. It isn't so it through.'

merely HUMAN.'

Ursula looked away. She was so frightened of argument.

Gudrun looked at Ursula with steady, balancing eyes. She

'But there CAN be something else, can't there?' she said.

admired and despised her sister so much, both! Then, sud-

'One can see it through in one's soul, long enough before it denly she averted her face, saying coldly, uglily: sees itself through in actuality. And then, when one has seen

'Well, I've got no further than love, yet.'

one's soul, one is something else.'

Over Ursula's mind flashed the thought: 'Because you never

'CAN one see it through in one's soul?' asked Gudrun. 'If HAVE loved, you can't get beyond it.'

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Gudrun rose, came over to Ursula and put her arm round mous, somewhere?' her neck.

'Yes, I suppose. How about going back?' asked Birkin.

'Go and find your new world, dear,' she said, her voice

'Oh, I don't know. We may never get back. I don't look clanging with false benignity. 'After all, the happiest voyage is before and after,' said Gerald.

the quest of Rupert's Blessed Isles.'

'NOR pine for what is not,' said Birkin.

Her arm rested round Ursula's neck, her fingers on Ursula's Gerald looked into the distance, with the small-pupilled, cheek for a few moments. Ursula was supremely uncomfort-abstract eyes of a hawk.

able meanwhile. There was an insult in Gudrun's protective

'No. There's something final about this. And Gudrun patronage that was really too hurting. Feeling her sister's re-seems like the end, to me. I don't know—but she seems so sistance, Gudrun drew awkwardly away, turned over the pil-soft, her skin like silk, her arms heavy and soft. And it withers low, and disclosed the stockings again.

my consciousness, somehow, it burns the pith of my mind.'

'Ha—ha!' she laughed, rather hollowly. 'How we do talk He went on a few paces, staring ahead, his eyes fixed, looking indeed—new worlds and old—!'

like a mask used in ghastly religions of the barbarians. 'It And they passed to the familiar worldly subjects.

blasts your soul's eye,' he said, 'and leaves you sightless. Yet Gerald and Birkin had walked on ahead, waiting for the you WANT to be sightless, you

WANT to be blasted, you sledge to overtake them, conveying the departing guests.

don't want it any different.'

'How much longer will you stay here?' asked Birkin, glanc-He was speaking as if in a trance, verbal and blank. Then ing up at Gerald's very red, almost blank face.

suddenly he braced himself up with a kind of rhapsody, and

'Oh, I can't say,' Gerald replied. 'Till we get tired of it.'

looked at Birkin with vindictive, cowed eyes, saying:

'You're not afraid of the snow melting first?' asked Birkin.

'Do you know what it is to suffer when you are with a Gerald laughed.

woman? She's so beautiful, so perfect, you find her SO

'Does it melt?' he said.

GOOD, it tears you like a silk, and every stroke and bit cuts

'Things are all right with you then?' said Birkin.

hot—ha, that perfection, when you blast yourself, you blast Gerald screwed up his eyes a little.

yourself! And then—' he stopped on the snow and suddenly

'All right?' he said. 'I never know what those common words opened his clenched hands—'it's nothing—your brain might mean. All right and all wrong, don't they become synony-have gone charred as rags—and—' he looked round into the

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air with a queer histrionic movement 'it's blasting—you understand what I mean—it is a great experience, something final—and then—you're shrivelled as if struck by electricity.'

He walked on in silence. It seemed like bragging, but like a man in extremity bragging truthfully.

'Of course,' he resumed, 'I wouldn't NOT have had it! It's a complete experience. And she's a wonderful woman. But—

how I hate her somewhere! It's curious—'

Birkin looked at him, at his strange, scarcely conscious face.

Gerald seemed blank before his own words.

'But you've had enough now?' said Birkin. 'You have had Chapter 30.

your experience. Why work on an old wound?'

Snowed up.

'Oh,' said Gerald, 'I don't know. It's not finished—'

And the two walked on.

When Ursula and Birkin were gone, Gudrun felt herself

'I've loved you, as well as Gudrun, don't forget,' said Birkin free in her contest with Gerald. As they grew more used to bitterly. Gerald looked at him strangely, abstractedly.

each other, he seemed to press upon her more and more. At

'Have you?' he said, with icy scepticism. 'Or do you think first she could manage him, so that her own will was always you have?' He was hardly responsible for what he said.

left free. But very soon, he began to ignore her female tactics, The sledge came. Gudrun dismounted and they all made he dropped his respect for her whims and her privacies, he their farewell. They wanted to go apart, all of them. Birkin began to exert his own will blindly, without submitting to took his place, and the sledge drove away leaving Gudrun and hers.

Gerald standing on the snow, waving. Something froze Birkin's Already a vital conflict had set in, which frightened them heart, seeing them standing there in the isolation of the snow, both. But he was alone, whilst already she had begun to cast growing smaller and more isolated.

round for external resource.

When Ursula had gone, Gudrun felt her own existence had become stark and elemental. She went and crouched alone

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in her bedroom, looking out of the window at the big, flash-He stiffened himself further against her.

ing stars. In front was the faint shadow of the mountain-

'How much do you think I do?' he asked.

knot. That was the pivot. She felt strange and inevitable, as if

'I don't know,' she replied.

she were centred upon the pivot of all existence, there was no

'But what is your opinion?' he asked.

further reality.

There was a pause. At length, in the darkness, came her Presently Gerald opened the door. She knew he would not voice, hard and indifferent:

be long before he came. She was rarely alone, he pressed upon

'Very little indeed,' she said coldly, almost flippant.

her like a frost, deadening her.

His heart went icy at the sound of her voice.

'Are you alone in the dark?' he said. And she could tell by

'Why don't I love you?' he asked, as if admitting the truth his tone he resented it, he resented this isolation she had drawn of her accusation, yet hating her for it.

round herself. Yet, feeling static and inevitable, she was kind

'I don't know why you don't—I've been good to you. You towards him.

were in a FEARFUL state when you came to me.'

'Would you like to light the candle?' she asked.

Her heart was beating to suffocate her, yet she was strong He did not answer, but came and stood behind her, in the and unrelenting.

darkness.

'When was I in a fearful state?' he asked.

'Look,' she said, 'at that lovely star up there. Do you know

'When you first came to me. I HAD to take pity on you.

its name?'

But it was never love.'

He crouched beside her, to look through the low window.

It was that statement 'It was never love,' which sounded in

'No,' he said. 'It is very fine.'

his ears with madness.

'ISN'T it beautiful! Do you notice how it darts different

'Why must you repeat it so often, that there is no love?'

coloured fires—it flashes really superbly—'

he said in a voice strangled with rage.

They remained in silence. With a mute, heavy gesture she

'Well you don't THINK you love, do you?' she asked.

put her hand on his knee, and took his hand.

He was silent with cold passion of anger.

'Are you regretting Ursula?' he asked.

'You don't think you CAN love me, do you?' she repeated

'No, not at all,' she said. Then, in a slow mood, she asked: almost with a sneer.

'How much do you love me?'

'No,' he said.

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'You know you never HAVE loved me, don't you?'

But it was her voice only that coaxed him. Her senses were

'I don't know what you mean by the word 'love,' he re-entirely apart from him, cold and destructive of him. It was plied.

her overbearing WILL that insisted.

'Yes, you do. You know all right that you have never loved

'Won't you say you'll love me always?' she coaxed. 'Say it, me. Have you,

do you think?'

even if it isn't true—say it Gerald, do.'

'No,' he said, prompted by some barren spirit of truthful-

'I will love you always,' he repeated, in real agony, forcing ness and obstinacy.

the words out.

'And you never WILL love me,' she said finally, 'will you?'

She gave him a quick kiss.

There was a diabolic coldness in her, too much to bear.

'Fancy your actually having said it,' she said with a touch

'No,' he said.

of raillery.

'Then,' she replied, 'what have you against me!'

He stood as if he had been beaten.

He was silent in cold, frightened rage and despair. 'If only

'Try to love me a little more, and to want me a little less,'

I could kill her,' his heart was whispering repeatedly. 'If only she said, in a half contemptuous, half coaxing tone.

I could kill her—I should be free.'

The darkness seemed to be swaying in waves across his It seemed to him that death was the only severing of this mind, great waves of darkness plunging across his mind. It Gordian knot.

seemed to him he was degraded at the very quick, made of no

'Why do you torture me?' he said.

account.

She flung her arms round his neck.

'You mean you don't want me?' he said.

'Ah, I don't want to torture you,' she said pityingly, as if

'You are so insistent, and there is so little grace in you, so she were comforting a child. The impertinence made his veins little fineness. You are so crude. You break me—you only waste go cold, he was insensible. She held her arms round his neck, me—it is horrible to me.'

in a triumph of pity. And her pity for him was as cold as

'Horrible to you?' he repeated.

stone, its deepest motive was hate of him, and fear of his power

'Yes. Don't you think I might have a room to myself, now over her, which she must always counterfoil.

Ursula has gone? You can say you want a dressing room.'

'Say you love me,' she pleaded. 'Say you will love me for

'You do as you like—you can leave altogether if you like,'

ever—won't you—won't you?'

he managed to articulate.

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'Yes, I know that,' she replied. 'So can you. You can leave modically.

me whenever you like—without notice even.'

The hot blood began to flow again through his veins, his The great tides of darkness were swinging across his mind, limbs relaxed.

he could hardly stand upright. A terrible weariness overcame

'Turn round to me,' she whispered, forlorn with insistence him, he felt he must lie on the floor. Dropping off his clothes, and triumph.

he got into bed, and lay like a man suddenly overcome by So at last he was given again, warm and flexible. He turned drunkenness, the darkness lifting and plunging as if he were and gathered her in his arms. And feeling her soft against lying upon a black, giddy sea. He lay still in this strange, him, so perfectly and wondrously soft and recipient, his arms horrific reeling for some time, purely unconscious.

tightened on her. She was as if crushed, powerless in him. His At length she slipped from her own bed and came over to brain seemed hard and invincible now like a jewel, there was him. He remained rigid, his back to her. He was all but un-no resisting him.

conscious.

His passion was awful to her, tense and ghastly, and im-She put her arms round his terrifying, insentient body, personal, like a destruction, ultimate. She felt it would kill and laid her cheek against his hard shoulder.

her. She was being killed.

'Gerald,' she whispered. 'Gerald.'

'My God, my God,' she cried, in anguish, in his embrace, There was no change in him. She caught him against her.

feeling her life being killed within her. And when he was She pressed her breasts against his shoulders, she kissed his kissing her, soothing her, her breath came slowly, as if she shoulder, through the sleeping jacket. Her mind wondered, were really spent, dying.

over his rigid, unliving body. She was bewildered, and insis-

'Shall I die, shall I die?' she repeated to herself.

tent, only her will was set for him to speak to her.

And in the night, and in him, there was no answer to the

'Gerald, my dear!' she whispered, bending over him, kiss-question.

ing his ear.

And yet, next day, the fragment of her which was not de-Her warm breath playing, flying rhythmically over his ear, stroyed remained intact and hostile, she did not go away, she seemed to relax the tension. She could feel his body gradually remained to finish the holiday, admitting nothing. He scarcely relaxing a little, losing its terrifying, unnatural rigidity. Her ever left her alone, but followed her like a shadow, he was like hands clutched his limbs, his muscles, going over him spas-a doom upon her, a continual 'thou shalt,' 'thou shalt not.'

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Sometimes it was he who seemed strongest, whist she was however much he

might mentally WILL to be immune and almost gone, creeping near the earth like a spent wind; some-self-complete, the desire for this state was lacking, and he times it was the reverse. But always it was this eternal see-saw, could not create it. He could see that, to exist at all, he must one destroyed that the other might exist, one ratified because be perfectly free of Gudrun, leave her if she wanted to be left, the other was nulled.

demand nothing of her, have no claim upon her.

'In the end,' she said to herself, 'I shall go away from him.'

But then, to have no claim upon her, he must stand by

'I can be free of her,' he said to himself in his paroxysms of himself, in sheer nothingness. And his brain turned to nought suffering.

at the idea. It was a state of nothingness. On the other hand, And he set himself to be free. He even prepared to go he might give in, and fawn to her. Or, finally, he might kill away, to leave her in the lurch. But for the first time there was her. Or he might become just indifferent, purposeless, dissia flaw in his will.

pated, momentaneous. But his nature was too serious, not gay

'Where shall I go?' he asked himself.

enough or subtle enough for mocking licentiousness.

'Can't you be self-sufficient?' he replied to himself, putA strange rent had been torn in him; like a victim that is ting himself upon his pride.

torn open and given to the heavens, so he had been torn apart

'Self-sufficient!' he repeated.

and given to Gudrun. How should he close again? This wound, It seemed to him that Gudrun was sufficient unto herself, this strange, infinitely-sensitive opening of his soul, where he closed round and completed, like a thing in a case. In the was exposed, like an open flower, to all the universe, and in calm,

static reason of his soul, he recognised this, and admit-which he was given to his complement, the other, the unted it was her right, to be closed round upon herself, self-known, this wound, this disclosure, this unfolding of his own complete, without desire. He realised it, he admitted it, it covering, leaving him incomplete, limited, unfinished, like an only needed one last effort on his own part, to win for himself open flower under the sky, this was his cruellest joy. Why the same completeness. He knew that it only needed one con-then should he forego it? Why should he close up and be-vulsion of his will for him to be able to turn upon himself come impervious, immune, like a partial thing in a sheath, also, to close upon himself as a stone fixes upon itself, and is when he had broken forth, like a seed that has germinated, to impervious, self-completed, a thing isolated.

issue forth in being, embracing the unrealised heavens.

This knowledge threw him into a terrible chaos. Because, He would keep the unfinished bliss of his own yearning

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even through the torture she inflicted upon him. A strange shadow, and above, like an annunciation, hovered a rosy trans-obstinacy possessed him. He would not go away from her port in mid-air.

whatever she said or did. A strange, deathly yearning carried To her it was so beautiful, it was a delirium, she wanted to him along with her. She was the

determinating influence of gather the glowing, eternal peaks to her breast, and die. He his very being, though she treated him with contempt, re-saw them, saw they were beautiful. But there arose no clamour peated rebuffs, and denials, still he would never be gone, since in his breast, only a bitterness that was visionary in itself. He in being near her, even, he felt the quickening, the going forth wished the peaks were grey and unbeautiful, so that she should in him, the release, the knowledge of his own limitation and not get her support from them. Why did she betray the two the magic of the promise, as well as the mystery of his own of them so terribly, in embracing the glow of the evening?

destruction and annihilation.

Why did she leave him standing there, with the ice-wind She tortured the open heart of him even as he turned to blowing through his heart, like death, to gratify herself among her. And she was tortured herself. It may have been her will the rosy snow-tips?

was stronger. She felt, with horror, as if he tore at the bud of

'What does the twilight matter?' he said. 'Why do you her heart, tore it open, like an irreverent persistent being. Like grovel before it? Is it so important to you?'

a boy who pulls off a fly's wings, or tears open a bud to see She winced in violation and in fury.

what is in the flower, he tore at her privacy, at her very life, he

'Go away,' she cried, 'and leave me to it. It is beautiful, would destroy her as an immature bud, torn open, is destroyed.

beautiful,' she sang in strange, rhapsodic tones. 'It is the most She might open towards him, a long while hence, in her beautiful thing I have ever seen in my life. Don't try to come dreams, when she was a pure spirit. But now she was not to be between it and me. Take yourself away, you are out of place—violated and ruined. She closed against him fiercely.

,

They climbed together, at evening, up the high slope, to He stood back a little, and left her standing there, statue-see the sunset. In the finely breathing, keen wind they stood like, transported into the mystic glowing east. Already the and watched the yellow sun sink in crimson and disappear.

rose was fading, large white stars were flashing out. He waited.

Then in the east the peaks and ridges glowed with living rose, He would forego everything but the yearning.

incandescent like immortal flowers against a brown-purple

'That was the most perfect thing I have ever seen,' she said sky, a miracle, whilst down below the world was a bluish in cold, brutal tones, when at last she turned round to him. 'It

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amazes me that you should want to destroy it. If you can't see loved, and which she did not practise. The he seemed to sweep it yourself, why try to debar me?' But in reality, he had de-out of life, to be a projectile into the beyond. And often, stroyed it for her, she was straining after a dead effect.

when he went away, she talked to the little German sculptor.

'One day,' he said, softly, looking up at her, 'I shall destroy They had an invariable topic, in their art.

YOU, as you stand looking at the sunset; because you are They were almost of the same ideas. He hated Mestrovic, such a liar.'

was not satisfied with the Futurists, he liked the West Afri-There was a soft, voluptuous promise to himself in the can wooden figures, the Aztec art, Mexican and Central words. She was chilled but arrogant.

American. He saw the grotesque, and a curious sort of me-

'Ha!' she said. 'I am not afraid of your threats!' She denied chanical motion intoxicated him, a confusion in nature. They herself to him, she kept her room rigidly private to herself.

had a curious game with each other, Gudrun and Loerke, of But he waited on, in a curious patience, belonging to his yearn-infinite suggestivity, strange and leering, as if they had some ing for her.

esoteric understanding of life, that they alone were initiated

'In the end,' he said to himself with real voluptuous prom-into the fearful central secrets, that the world dared not know.

ise, 'when it reaches that point, I shall do away with her.' And Their whole correspondence was in a strange, barely comprehe trembled delicately in every limb, in anticipation, as he hensible suggestivity, they kindled themselves at the subtle trembled in his most violent accesses of passionate approach lust of the Egyptians or the Mexicans. The whole game was to her, trembling with too much desire.

one of subtle inter-suggestivity, and they wanted to keep it She had a curious sort of allegiance with Loerke, all the on the plane of suggestion. From their verbal and physical while, now, something insidious and traitorous. Gerald knew nuances they got the highest satisfaction in the nerves, from a of it. But in the unnatural state of patience, and the unwill-queer interchange of half-suggested ideas, looks, expressions ingness to harden himself against her, in

which he found him-and gestures, which were quite intolerable, though incom-self, he took no notice, although her soft kindliness to the prehensible, to Gerald. He had no terms in which to think of other man, whom he hated as a noxious insect, made him their commerce, his terms were much too gross.

shiver again with an access of the strange shuddering that The suggestion of primitive art was their refuge, and the came over him repeatedly.

inner mysteries of sensation their object of worship. Art and He left her alone only when he went skiing, a sport he Life were to them the Reality and the Unreality.

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'Of course,' said Gudrun, 'life doesn't REALLY matter—

brusqueness, a savage contempt in his manner, that made it is one's art which is central. What one does in one's life has Gudrun's blood flare up, and made Loerke keen and morti-PEU DE RAPPORT, it doesn't signify much.'

fied. For Gerald came down like a sledge-hammer with his

'Yes, that is so, exactly,' replied the sculptor. 'What one assertions, anything the little German said was merely con-does in one's art, that is the breath of one's being. What one temptible rubbish.

does in one's life, that is a bagatelle for the outsiders to fuss At last Loerke turned to Gudrun, raising his hands in help-about.'

less irony, a shrug of ironical dismissal, something appealing It was curious what a sense of elation and freedom Gudrun and childlike.

found in this communication. She felt established for ever.

'Sehen sie, gnadige Frau-' he began.

Of course Gerald was BAGATELLE. Love was one of the

'Bitte sagen Sie nicht immer, gnadige Frau,' cried Gudrun, temporal things in her life, except in so far as she was an her eyes flashing, her cheeks burning. She looked like a vivid artist. She thought of Cleopatra—Cleopatra must have been Medusa. Her voice was loud and clamorous, the other people an artist; she reaped the essential from a man, she harvested in the room were startled.

the ultimate sensation, and threw away the husk; and Mary

'Please don't call me Mrs Crich,' she cried aloud.

Stuart, and the great Rachel, panting with her lovers after the The name, in Loerke's mouth particularly, had been an theatre, these were the exoteric exponents of love. After all, intolerable humiliation and constraint upon her, these many what was the lover but fuel for the transport of this subtle days.

knowledge, for a female art, the art of pure, perfect knowl-The two men looked at her in amazement. Gerald went edge in sensuous understanding.

white at the cheek-bones.

One evening Gerald was arguing with Loerke about Italy

'What shall I say, then?' asked Loerke, with soft, mocking and Tripoli. The Englishman was in a strange, inflammable insinuation.

state, the German was excited. It was a contest of words, but

'Sagen Sie nur nicht das,' she muttered, her cheeks flushed it meant a conflict of spirit between the two men. And all the crimson. 'Not that, at least.'

while Gudrun could see in Gerald an arrogant English con-She saw, by the dawning look on Loerke's face, that he had tempt for a foreigner. Although Gerald was quivering, his understood. She was NOT Mrs Crich! So-o-, that explained eyes flashing, his face flushed, in his argument there was a a great deal.

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'Soll ich Fraulein sagen?' he asked, malevolently.

it always fascinated her.

'I am not married,' she said, with some hauteur.

She waited, troubled, throughout the evening. She thought Her heart was fluttering now, beating like a bewildered he would avoid her, or give some sign. But he spoke to her bird. She knew she had dealt a cruel wound, and she could simply and unemotionally, as he would to anyone else in the not bear it.

room. A certain peace, an abstraction possessed his soul.

Gerald sat erect, perfectly still, his face pale and calm, like She went to his

room, hotly, violently in love with him.

the face of a statue. He was unaware of her, or of Loerke or He was so beautiful and inaccessible. He kissed her, he was a anybody. He sat perfectly still, in an unalterable calm. Loerke, lover to her. And she had extreme pleasure of him. But he did meanwhile, was crouching and glancing up from under his not come to, he remained remote and candid, unconscious.

ducked head.

She wanted to speak to him. But this innocent, beautiful state Gudrun was tortured for something to say, to relieve the of unconsciousness that had come upon him prevented her.

suspense. She twisted her face in a smile, and glanced know-She felt tormented and dark.

ingly, almost sneering, at Gerald.

In the morning, however, he looked at her with a little

'Truth is best,' she said to him, with a grimace.

aversion, some horror and some hatred darkening into his eyes.

But now again she was under his domination; now, be-She withdrew on to her old ground. But still he would not cause she had dealt him this blow; because she had destroyed gather himself together, against her.

him, and she did not know how he had taken it. She watched Loerke was waiting for her now. The little artist, isolated him. He was interesting to her. She had lost her interest in in his own complete envelope, felt that here at last was a woman Loerke.

from whom he could get something. He was uneasy all the Gerald rose at length, and went over in a leisurely still while, waiting to talk with her, subtly contriving to be near movement, to the Professor. The two began a conversation on her. Her presence filled him with keenness and excitement, Goethe.

he gravitated cunningly towards her, as if she had some unShe was rather piqued by the simplicity of Gerald's seen force of attraction.

demeanour this evening. He did not seem angry or disgusted, He was not in the least doubtful of himself, as regards only he looked curiously innocent and pure, really beautiful.

Gerald. Gerald was one of the outsiders. Loerke only hated Sometimes it came upon him, this look of clear distance, and him for being rich and proud and of fine appearance. All

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these things, however, riches, pride of social standing, hand-distorted, horrific.

some physique, were externals. When it came to the relation What then, what next? Was it sheer blind force of pas-with a woman such as Gudrun, he, Loerke, had an approach sion that would satisfy her now? Not this, but the subtle and a power that Gerald never dreamed of.

thrills of extreme sensation in reduction. It was an unbroken How should Gerald hope to satisfy a woman of Gudrun's will reacting against her unbroken will in a myriad subtle calibre? Did he think that pride or masterful will or physical thrills of reduction, the last subtle activities of analysis and

strength would help him? Loerke knew a secret beyond these breaking down, carried out in the darkness of her, whilst the things. The greatest power is the one that is subtle and ad-outside form, the individual, was utterly unchanged, even sen-justs itself, not one which blindly attacks. And he, Loerke, timental in its poses.

had understanding where Gerald was a calf. He, Loerke, could But between two particular people, any two people on penetrate into depths far out of Gerald's knowledge. Gerald earth, the range of pure sensational experience is limited. The was left behind like a postulant in the ante-room of this temple climax of sensual reaction, once reached in any direction, is of mysteries, this woman. But he Loerke, could he not pen-reached finally, there is no going on. There is only repetition etrate into the inner darkness, find the spirit of the woman in possible, or the going apart of the two protagonists, or the its inner recess, and wrestle with it there, the central serpent subjugating of the one will to the other, or death.

that is coiled at the core of life.

Gerald had penetrated all the outer places of Gudrun's What was it, after all, that a woman wanted? Was it mere soul. He was to her the most crucial instance of the existing social effect, fulfilment of ambition in the social world, in the world, the NE PLUS ULTRA of the world of man as it excommunity of mankind? Was it even a union in love and isted for her. In him she knew the world, and had done with goodness? Did she want 'goodness'? Who but a fool would it. Knowing him finally she was the Alexander seeking new accept this of Gudrun? This was but the street view of her worlds. But there WERE no new worlds, there were no more wants. Cross the threshold, and you found her completely, MEN, there were only creatures, little, ultimate CREATURES

completely cynical about the social world and its advantages.

like Loerke. The world was finished now, for her. There was Once inside the house of her soul and there was a pungent only the inner, individual darkness, sensation within the ego, atmosphere of corrosion, an inflamed darkness of sensation, the obscene religious mystery of ultimate reduction, the mystic and a vivid, subtle, critical consciousness, that saw the world frictional activities

of diabolic reducing down, disintegrating **Contents**



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the vital organic body of life.

this was his limitation.

All this Gudrun knew in her subconsciousness, not in her There was a hovering triumph in Loerke, since Gudrun mind. She knew her next step-she knew what she should move had denied her marriage with Gerald. The artist seemed to on to, when she left Gerald. She was afraid of Gerald, that he hover like a creature on the wing, waiting to settle. He did not might kill her. But she did not intend to be killed. A fine approach Gudrun violently, he was never ill-timed. But car-thread still united her to him. It should not be HER death ried on by a sure instinct in the complete darkness of his soul, which broke it. She had further to go, a further, slow exquishe corresponded mystically with her, imperceptibly, but pal-ite experience to reap, unthinkable subtleties of sensation to pably.

know, before she was finished.

For two days, he talked to her, continued the discussions Of the last series of subtleties, Gerald was not capable. He of art, of life, in which they both found such pleasure. They could not touch the quick of her. But where his ruder blows praised the by-gone things, they took a sentimental, childish could not penetrate, the fine, insinuating blade of Loerke's delight in the achieved perfections of the past. Particularly insect-like comprehension could. At least,

it was time for her they liked the late eighteenth century, the period of Goethe now to pass over to the other, the creature, the final crafts-and of Shelley, and Mozart.

man. She knew that Loerke, in his innermost soul, was de-They played with the past, and with the great figures of tached from everything, for him there was neither heaven nor the past, a sort of little game of chess, or marionettes, all to earth nor hell. He admitted no allegiance, he gave no adher-please themselves. They had all the great men for their mari-ence anywhere. He was single and, by abstraction from the onettes, and they two were the God of the show, working it rest, absolute in himself.

all. As for the future, that they never mentioned except one Whereas in Gerald's soul there still lingered some attach-laughed out some mocking dream of the destruction of the ment to the rest, to the whole. And this was his limitation.

world by a ridiculous catastrophe of man's invention: a man He was limited, BORNE, subject to his necessity, in the last invented such a perfect explosive that it blew the earth in issue, for goodness, for righteousness, for oneness with the two, and the two halves set off in different directions through ultimate purpose. That the ultimate purpose might be the space, to the dismay of the inhabitants: or else the people of perfect and subtle experience of the process of death, the will the world divided into two halves, and each half decided IT

being kept unimpaired, that was not allowed in him. And was perfect and right, the other half was wrong and must be

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destroyed; so another end of the world. Or else, Loerke's dream And all the while they two were hovering, hesitating round of fear, the world went cold, and snow fell everywhere, and the flame of some invisible declaration. He wanted it, but was only white creatures, polar-bears, white foxes, and men like held back by some inevitable reluctance. She wanted it also, awful white snow-birds, persisted in ice cruelty.

but she wanted to put it off, to put it off indefinitely, she still Apart from these stories, they never talked of the future.

had some pity for Gerald, some connection with him. And They delighted most either in mocking imaginations of de-the most fatal of all, she had the reminiscent sentimental com-struction, or in sentimental, fine marionetteshows of the past.

passion for herself in connection with him. Because of what It was a sentimental delight to reconstruct the world of Goethe HAD been, she felt herself held to him by immortal, invis-at Weimar, or of Schiller and poverty and faithful love, or to ible threads-because of what HAD been, because of his com-see again Jean Jacques in his quakings, or Voltaire at Ferney, ing to her that first night, into her own house, in his extrem-or Frederick the Great reading his own poetry.

ity, because—

They talked together for hours, of literature and sculpture Gerald was gradually overcome with a revulsion of loath-and painting, amusing themselves with Flaxman and Blake ing for Loerke. He did not take the man seriously, he de-and Fuseli, with tenderness, and with Feuerbach and Bocklin.

spised him merely, except as he felt in Gudrun's veins the It would take them a life-time, they felt to live again, IN

influence of the little creature. It was this that drove Gerald PETTO, the lives of the great artists. But they preferred to wild, the feeling in Gudrun's veins of Loerke's presence, stay in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

Loerke's being, flowing dominant through her.

They talked in a mixture of languages. The ground-work

'What makes you so smitten with that little vermin?' he was French, in either case. But he ended most of his sentences asked, really puzzled. For he, manlike, could not see anyin a stumble of English and a conclusion of German, she thing attractive or important AT ALL in Loerke. Gerald ex-skilfully wove herself to her end in whatever phrase came to pected to find some handsomeness or nobleness, to account her. She took a peculiar delight in this conversation. It was for a woman's subjection. But he saw none here, only an infull of odd, fantastic expression, of double meanings, of evasect-like repulsiveness.

sions, of suggestive vagueness. It was a real physical pleasure Gudrun flushed deeply. It was these attacks she would to her to make this thread of conversation out of the differ-never forgive.

ent-coloured stands of three languages.

'What do you mean?' she replied. 'My God, what a mercy

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I am NOT married to you!'

a chair. She watched the change in his body. She saw his Her voice of flouting and contempt scotched him. He was clenched, mechanical body moving there like an obsession.

brought up short. But he recovered himself.

Her hatred of him was tinged with fatal contempt.

'Tell me, only tell me,' he reiterated in a dangerous nar-

'It's not a question of my right over you—though I HAVE

rowed voice—'tell me what it is that fascinates you in him.'

some right, remember. I want to know, I only want to know

'I am not fascinated,' she said, with cold repelling inno-what it is that subjugates you to that little scum of a sculptor cence.

downstairs, what it is that brings you down like a humble

'Yes, you are. You are fascinated by that little dry snake, maggot, in worship of him. I want to know what you creep like a bird gaping ready to fall down its throat.'

after.'

She looked at him with black fury.

She stood over against the window, listening. Then she

'I don't choose to be discussed by you,' she said.

turned round.

'It doesn't matter whether you choose or not,' he replied,

'Do you?' she said, in her most easy, most cutting voice.

'that doesn't alter the fact that you are ready to fall down and

'Do you want to know what it is in him? It's because he has kiss the feet of that little insect. And I don't want to prevent some understanding of a woman, because he is not stupid.

you—do it, fall down and kiss his feet. But I want to know, That's why it is.'

what it is that fascinates you—what is it?'

A queer, sinister, animal-like smile came over Gerald's face.

She was silent, suffused with black rage.

'But what understanding is it?' he said. 'The understand-

'How DARE you come brow-beating me,' she cried, 'how ing of a flea, a hopping flea with a proboscis. Why should dare you, you little squire, you bully. What right have you you crawl abject before the understanding of a flea?'

over me, do you think?'

There passed through Gudrun's mind Blake's representa-His face was white and gleaming, she knew by the light in tion of the soul of a flea. She wanted to fit it to Loerke. Blake his eyes that she was in his power—the wolf. And because she was a clown too. But it was necessary to answer Gerald.

was in his power, she hated him with a power that she won-

'Don't you think the understanding of a flea is more inter-dered did not kill him. In her will she killed him as he stood, esting than the understanding of a fool?' she asked.

effaced him.

'A fool!' he repeated.

'It is not a question of right,' said Gerald, sitting down on

'A fool, a conceited fool—a Dummkopf,' she replied, add-

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ing the German word.

HOW could he look at her with those clear, warm, waiting

'Do you call me a fool?' he replied. 'Well, wouldn't I rather eyes, waiting for her, even now? What had been said between be the fool I am, than that flea downstairs?'

them, was it not enough to put them worlds asunder, to freeze She looked at him. A certain blunt, blind stupidity in him them forever apart! And yet he was all transfused and roused, palled on her soul, limiting her.

waiting for her.

'You give yourself away by that last,' she said.

It confused her. Turning her head aside, she said: He sat and wondered.

'I shall always TELL you, whenever I am going to make

'I shall go away soon,' he said.

any change—'

She turned on him.

And with this she moved out of the room.

'Remember,' she said, 'I am completely independent of He sat suspended in a fine recoil of disappointment, that you—completely. You make your arrangements, I make mine.'

seemed gradually to be destroying his understanding. But the He pondered this.

unconscious state of patience persisted in him. He remained

'You mean we are strangers from this minute?' he asked.

motionless, without thought or knowledge, for a long time.

She halted and flushed. He was putting her in a trap, forcing Then he rose, and went downstairs, to play at chess with one her hand. She turned round on him.

of the students. His face was open and clear, with a certain

'Strangers,' she said, 'we can never be. But if you WANT

innocent LAISSER-ALLER that troubled Gudrun most, to make any movement apart from me, then I wish you to made her almost afraid of him, whilst she disliked him deeply know you are perfectly free to do so. Do not consider me in for it.

the slightest.'

It was after this that Loerke, who had never yet spoken to Even so slight an implication that she needed him and her personally, began to ask her of her state.

was depending on him still was sufficient to rouse his pas-

'You are not married at all, are you?' he asked.

sion. As he sat a change came over his body, the hot, molten She looked full at him.

stream mounted involuntarily through his veins. He groaned

'Not in the least,' she replied, in her measured way. Loerke inwardly, under its bondage, but he loved it. He looked at her laughed, wrinkling up his face oddly. There was a thin wisp with clear eyes, waiting for her.

of his hair straying on his forehead, she noticed that his skin She knew at once, and was shaken with cold revulsion.

was of a clear brown colour, his hands, his wrists. And his

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hands seemed closely prehensile. He seemed like topaz, so Why deny it—why make any question of it? You are an ex-strangely brownish and pellucid.

traordinary woman, why should you follow the ordinary course,

'Good,' he said.

the ordinary life?'

Still it needed some courage for him to go on.

Gudrun sat looking at her hands, flushed. She was pleased

'Was Mrs Birkin your sister?' he asked.

that he said, so simply, that she was a remarkable woman. He

'Yes.'

would not say that to flatter her—he was far too self-opin-

'And was SHE married?'

ionated and objective by nature. He said it as he would say a

'She was married.'

piece of sculpture was remarkable, because he knew it was so.

'Have you parents, then?'

And it gratified her to hear it from him. Other people had

'Yes,' said Gudrun, 'we have parents.'

such a passion to make everything of one degree, of one pat-And she told him, briefly, laconically, her position. He tern. In England it was chic to be perfectly ordinary. And it watched her closely, curiously all the while.

was a relief to her to be acknowledged extraordinary. Then

'So!' he exclaimed, with some surprise. 'And the Herr Crich, she need not fret about the common standards.

is he rich?'

'You see,' she said, 'I have no money whatsoever.'

'Yes, he is rich, a coal owner.'

'Ach, money!' he cried, lifting his shoulders. 'When one is

'How long has your friendship with him lasted?'

grown up, money is lying about at one's service. It is only

'Some months.'

when one is young that it is rare. Take no thought for money—

There was a pause.

that always lies to hand.'

'Yes, I am surprised,' he said at length. 'The English, I

'Does it?' she said, laughing.

thought they were so—cold. And what do you think to do

'Always. The Gerald will give you a sum, if you ask him when you leave here?'

for it—'

'What do I think to do?' she repeated.

She flushed deeply.

'Yes. You cannot go back to the teaching. No—' he shrugged

'I will ask anybody else,' she said, with some difficulty—

his shoulders—'that is impossible. Leave that to the

'but not him.'

CANAILLE who can do nothing else. You, for your part—

Loerke looked closely at her.

you know, you are a remarkable woman, eine seltsame Frau.

'Good,' he said. 'Then let it be somebody else. Only don't

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go back to that England, that school. No, that is stupid.'

'I think the same,' she said.

Again there was a pause. He was afraid to ask her outright

'A bore,' he repeated. 'What does it matter whether I wear to go with him, he was not even quite sure he wanted her; and this hat or another. So love. I needn't wear a hat at all, only for she was afraid to be asked. He begrudged his own isolation, convenience. Neither need I love except for convenience. I was VERY chary of sharing his life, even for a day.

tell you what, gnadige Frau—' and he leaned towards her—

'The only other place I know is Paris,' she said, 'and I can't then he made a quick, odd gesture, as of striking something stand that.'

aside—'gnadige Fraulein, never mind—I tell you what, I She looked with her wide, steady eyes full at Loerke. He would give everything, everything, all your love, for a little lowered his head and averted his face.

companionship in intelligence—' his eyes flickered darkly, evilly

'Paris, no!' he said. 'Between the RELIGION D'AMOUR, at her. 'You understand?' he asked, with a faint smile. 'It and the latest 'ism, and the new turning to Jesus, one had wouldn't matter if she were a hundred years old, a thousand—

better ride on a carrousel all day. But come to Dresden. I have it would be all the same to me, so that she can UNDERa studio there—I can give you work, —oh, that would be easy STAND.' He shut his eyes with a little snap.

enough. I haven't seen any of your things, but I believe in Again Gudrun was rather offended. Did he not think her you. Come to Dresden—that is a fine town to be in, and as good looking, then? Suddenly she laughed.

good a life as you can expect of a town. You have everything

'I shall have to wait about eighty years to suit you, at that!'

there, without the foolishness of Paris or the beer of Munich.'

she said. 'I am ugly enough, aren't I?'

He sat and looked at her, coldly. What she liked about He looked at her with an artist's sudden, critical, estimat-him was that he spoke to her simple and flat, as to himself.

ing eye.

He was a fellow craftsman, a fellow being to her, first.

'You are beautiful,' he said, 'and I am glad of it. But it isn't

'No—Paris,' he resumed, 'it makes me sick. Pah—l'amour.

that—it isn't that,' he cried, with emphasis that flattered her.

I detest it. L'amour, l'amore, die Liebe—I detest it in every

'It is that you have a certain wit, it is the kind of understand-language. Women and love, there is no greater tedium,' he ing. For me, I am little, chetif, insignificant. Good! Do not cried.

ask me to be strong and handsome, then. But it is the ME—

She was slightly offended. And yet, this was her own basic

'he put his fingers to his mouth, oddly—'it is the ME that is feeling. Men, and love—there was no greater tedium.

looking for a mistress, and my ME is waiting for the THEE

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of the mistress, for the match to my particular intelligence.

only shook his head.

You understand?'

'I don't know,' he said, 'I don't know.'

'Yes,' she said, 'I understand.'

Gerald did not come in from his skiing until nightfall, he

'As for the other, this amour—' he made a gesture, dashing missed the coffee and cake that she took at four o'clock. The his hand aside, as if to dash away something troublesome—'it snow was in perfect condition, he had travelled a long way, by is unimportant, unimportant. Does it matter, whether I drink himself, among the snow ridges, on his skis, he had climbed white wine this evening, or whether I drink nothing? IT

high, so high that he could see over the top of the pass, five DOES NOT MATTER, it does not matter. So this love, this miles distant, could see the Marienhutte, the hostel on the amour, this BAISER. Yes or no, soit ou soit pas, today, to-crest of the pass, half buried in snow, and over into the deep morrow, or never, it is all the same, it does not matter—no valley beyond, to the dusk of the pine trees. One could go more than the white wine.'

that way home; but he shuddered with nausea at the thought He ended with an odd dropping of the head in a desper-of home;—one could travel on skis down there, and come to ate negation. Gudrun watched him steadily. She had gone the old imperial road, below the pass. But why come to any pale.

road? He revolted at the thought of finding himself in the Suddenly she stretched over and seized his hand in her world again. He must stay up there in the snow forever. He own.

had been happy by himself, high up there alone, travelling

'That is true,' she said, in rather a high, vehement voice, swiftly on skis, taking far flights, and skimming past the dark

'that is true for me too. It is the understanding that matters.'

rocks veined with brilliant snow.

He looked up at her almost frightened, furtive. Then he But he felt something icy gathering at his heart. This nodded, a little sullenly. She let go his hand:

he had made not strange mood of patience and innocence which had persisted the lightest response. And they sat in silence.

in him for some days, was passing away, he would be left

'Do you know,' he said, suddenly looking at her with dark, again a prey to the horrible passions and tortures.

self-important, prophetic eyes, 'your fate and mine, they will So he came down reluctantly, snow-burned, snow-es-run together, till—' and he broke off in a little grimace.

tranged, to the house in the hollow, between the knuckles of

'Till when?' she asked, blanched, her lips going white. She the mountain tops. He saw its lights shining yellow, and he was terribly susceptible to these evil prognostications, but he held back, wishing he need not go in, to confront those people, **Contents**



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to hear the turmoil of voices and to feel the confusion of ment to make, and it must be made as she had thought it.

other presences. He was isolated as if there were a vacuum

'I can't see the use of going back,' she continued. 'It is over round his heart, or a sheath of pure ice.

between me and you—'

The moment he saw Gudrun something jolted in his soul.

She paused for him to speak. But he said nothing. He was She was looking rather lofty and superb, smiling slowly and only talking to himself, saying 'Over, is it? I believe it is over.

graciously to the Germans. A sudden desire leapt in his heart, But it isn't finished. Remember, it isn't finished. We must to kill her. He thought, what a perfect voluptuous fulfilment put some sort of a finish on it. There must be a conclusion, it would be, to kill her. His mind was absent all the evening, there must be finality.'

estranged by the snow and his passion. But he kept the idea So he talked to himself, but aloud he said nothing what-constant within him, what a perfect voluptuous consumma-ever.

tion it would be to strangle her, to strangle every spark of life

'What has been, has been,' she continued. 'There is noth-out of her, till she lay completely inert, soft, relaxed for ever, a ing that I regret. I hope you regret nothing—'

soft heap lying dead between his hands, utterly dead. Then She waited for him to speak.

he would have had her finally and for ever; there would be

'Oh, I regret nothing,' he said, accommodatingly.

such a perfect voluptuous finality.

'Good then,' she answered, 'good then. Then neither of us Gudrun was unaware of what he was feeling, he seemed so cherishes any regrets, which is as it should be.'

quiet and amiable, as usual. His amiability even made her feel

'Quite as it should be,' he said aimlessly.

brutal towards him.

She paused to gather up her thread again.

She went into his room when he was partially undressed.

'Our attempt has been a failure,' she said. 'But we can try She did not notice the curious, glad gleam of pure hatred, again, elsewhere.'

with which he looked at her. She stood near the door, with her A little flicker of rage ran through his blood. It was as if hand behind her.

she were rousing him, goading him. Why must she do it?

'I have been thinking, Gerald,' she said, with an insulting

'Attempt at what?' he asked.

nonchalance, 'that I shall not go back to England.'

'At being lovers, I suppose,' she said, a little baffled, yet so

'Oh,' he said, 'where will you go then?'

trivial she made it all seem.

But she ignored his question. She had her own logical state-

'Our attempt at being lovers has been a failure?' he re-

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peated aloud.

She knew her life trembled on the edge of an abyss. But she To himself he was saying, 'I ought to kill her here. There was curiously sure of her footing. She knew her cunning could is only this left, for me to kill her.' A heavy, overcharged desire outwit him.

to bring about her death possessed him. She was unaware.

She trembled, as she stood in her room, with excitement

'Hasn't it?' she asked. 'Do you think it has been a success?'

and awful exhilaration. She knew she could outwit him. She Again the insult of the flippant question ran through his could depend on her presence of mind, and on her wits. But blood like a current of fire.

it was a fight to the death, she knew it now. One slip, and she

'It had some of the elements of success, our relationship,'

was lost. She had a strange, tense, exhilarated sickness in her he replied. 'It—might have come off.'

body, as one who is in peril of falling from a great height, but But he paused before concluding the last phrase. Even as who does not look down, does not admit the fear.

he began the sentence, he did not believe in what he was go-

'I will go away the day after tomorrow,' she said.

ing to say. He knew it never could have been a success.

She only did not want Gerald to think that she was afraid

'No,' she replied. 'You cannot love.'

of him, that she was running away because she was afraid of

'And you?' he asked.

him. She was not afraid of him, fundamentally. She knew it Her wide, dark-filled eyes were fixed on him, like two was her safeguard to avoid his physical violence. But even moons of darkness.

physically she was not afraid of him. She wanted to prove it

'I couldn't love YOU,' she said, with stark cold truth.

to him. When she had proved it, that, whatever he was, she A blinding flash went over his brain, his body jolted. His was not afraid of him; when she had proved THAT, she could heart had burst into flame. His consciousness was gone into leave him forever. But meanwhile the fight between them, his wrists, into his hands. He was one blind, incontinent de-terrible as she knew it to be, was inconclusive. And she wanted sire, to kill her. His wrists were bursting, there would be no to be confident in herself. However many terrors she might satisfaction till his hands had closed on her.

have, she would be unafraid, uncowed by him. He could never But even before his body swerved forward on her, a sud-cow her, nor dominate her, nor have any right over her; this den, cunning comprehension was expressed on her face, and she would maintain until she had proved it. Once it was proved, in a flash she was out of the door. She ran in one flash to her she was free of him forever.

room and locked herself in. She was afraid, but confident.

But she had not proved it yet, neither to him nor to her-

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self. And this was what still bound her to him. She was bound He would grind on at the old mills forever. And really, there to him, she could not live beyond him. She sat up in bed, is no corn between the millstones any more. They grind on closely wrapped up, for many hours, thinking endlessly to and on, when there is nothing to grind—saying the same herself. It was as if she would never have done weaving the things, believing the same things, acting the same things. Oh, great provision of her thoughts.

my God, it would wear out the patience of a stone.

'It isn't as if he really loved me,' she said to herself. 'He

'I don't worship Loerke, but at any rate, he is a free indi-doesn't. Every woman he comes across he wants to make her vidual. He is not stiff with conceit of his own maleness. He is in love with him. He doesn't even know that he is doing it.

not grinding dutifully at the old mills. Oh God, when I think But there he is, before every woman he unfurls his male at-of Gerald, and his work—those offices at Beldover, and the tractiveness, displays his great desirability, he tries to make mines—it makes my heart sick. What HAVE I to do with every woman think how wonderful it would be to have him it—and him thinking he can be a lover to a woman! One for a lover. His very ignoring of the women is part of the might as well ask it of a self-satisfied lamp-post. These men, game. He is never UNCONSCIOUS of them. He should with their eternal jobs—and their eternal mills of God that have been a cockerel, so he could

strut before fifty females, all keep on grinding at nothing! It is too boring, just boring.

his subjects. But really, his Don Juan does NOT interest me.

However did I come to take him seriously at all!

I could play Dona Juanita a million times better than he plays

'At least in Dresden, one will have one's back to it all. And Juan. He bores me, you know. His maleness bores me. Noth-there will be amusing things to do. It will be amusing to go to ing is so boring, so inherently stupid and stupidly conceited.

these eurythmic displays, and the German opera, the Ger-Really, the fathomless conceit of these men, it is ridiculous—

man theatre. It WILL be amusing to take part in German the little strutters.

Bohemian life. And Loerke is an artist, he is a free individual.

'They are all alike. Look at Birkin. Built out of the limita-One will escape from so much, that is the chief thing, escape tion of conceit they are, and nothing else. Really, nothing but so much hideous boring repetition of vulgar actions, vulgar their ridiculous limitation and intrinsic insignificance could phrases, vulgar postures. I don't delude myself that I shall make them so conceited.

find an elixir of life in Dresden. I know I shan't. But I shall

'As for Loerke, there is a thousand times more in him than get away from people who have their own homes and their in a Gerald. Gerald is so limited, there is a dead end to him.

own children and their own acquaintances and their own this

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and their own that. I shall be among people who DON'T

tick-tack, tick-tack, and the twitching of the clock-fingers.

own things and who HAVEN'T got a home and a domestic Gerald could not save her from it. He, his body, his mo-servant in the background, who haven't got a standing and a tion, his life—it was the same ticking, the same twitching status and a degree and a circle of friends of the same. Oh across the dial, a horrible mechanical twitching forward over God, the wheels within wheels of people, it makes one's head the face of the hours. What were his kisses, his embraces. She tick like a clock, with a very madness of dead mechanical could hear their tick-tack, tick-tack.

monotony and meaninglessness. How I HATE life, how I Ha—ha—she laughed to herself, so frightened that she hate it. How I hate the Geralds, that they can offer one noth-was trying to laugh it off—ha—ha, how maddening it was, to ing else.

be sure, to be sure!

'Shortlands!—Heavens! Think of living there, one week, Then, with a fleeting selfconscious motion, she wondered then the next, and THEN THE THIRD—

if she would be very much surprised, on rising in the morn-

'No, I won't think of it—it is too much.'

ing, to realise that her hair had turned white. She had FELT

And she broke off, really terrified, really unable to bear it turning white so often, under the intolerable burden of her any more.

thoughts, und her sensations. Yet there it remained, brown as The thought of the mechanical succession of day follow-ever, and there she was herself, looking a picture of health.

ing day, day following day, AD INFINITUM, was one of Perhaps she was healthy. Perhaps it was only her the things that made her heart palpitate with a real approach unabateable health that left her so exposed to the truth. If of madness. The terrible bondage of this tick-tack of time, she were sickly she would have her illusions, imaginations. As this twitching of the hands of the clock, this eternal repeti-it was, there was no escape. She must always see and know tion of hours and days—oh God, it was too awful to contem-and never escape. She could never escape. There she was, placed plate. And there was no escape from it, no escape.

before the clock-face of life. And if she turned round as in a She almost wished Gerald were with her to save her from railway station, to look at the bookstall, still she could see, the terror of her own thoughts. Oh, how she suffered, lying with her very spine, she could see the clock, always the great there alone, confronted by the terrible clock, with its eternal white clock-face. In vain she fluttered the leaves of books, or tick-tack. All life, all life resolved itself into this: tick-tack, made statuettes in clay. She knew she was not REALLY read-tick-tack, tick-tack; then the striking of the hour; then the ing. She was not REALLY working. She was watching the **Contents**



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fingers twitch across the eternal, mechanical, monotonous some repose from her. Perhaps he did. Perhaps this was what clock-face of time. She never really lived, she only watched.

he was always dogging her for, like a child that is famished, Indeed, she was like a little, twelve-hour clock, vis-a-vis with crying for the breast. Perhaps this was the secret of his pas-the enormous clock of eternity—there she was, like Dignity sion, his forever unquenched desire for her—that he needed and Impudence, or Impudence and Dignity.

her to put him to sleep, to give him repose.

The picture pleased her. Didn't her face really look like a What then! Was she his mother? Had she asked for a clock dial—rather roundish and often pale, and impassive.

child, whom she must nurse through the nights, for her lover.

She would have got up to look, in the mirror, but the thought She despised him, she despised him, she hardened her heart.

of the sight of her own face, that was like a twelve-hour clock-An infant crying in the night, this Don Juan.

dial, filled her with such deep terror, that she hastened to Ooh, but how she hated the infant crying in the night.

think of something else.

She would murder it gladly. She would stifle it and bury it, as Oh, why wasn't somebody kind to her? Why wasn't there Hetty Sorrell did. No doubt Hetty Sorrell's infant cried in somebody who would take her in their arms, and hold her to the night—no doubt Arthur Donnithorne's infant would.

their breast, and give her rest, pure, deep, healing rest. Oh, Ha—the Arthur

Donnithornes, the Geralds of this world. So why wasn't there somebody to take her in their arms and fold manly by day, yet all the while, such a crying of infants in the her safe and perfect, for sleep. She wanted so much this pernight. Let them turn into mechanisms, let them. Let them fect enfolded sleep. She lay always so unsheathed in sleep.

become instruments, pure machines, pure wills, that work like She would lie always unsheathed in sleep, unrelieved, un-clock-work, in perpetual repetition. Let them be this, let them saved. Oh, how could she bear it, this endless unrelief, this be taken up entirely in their work, let them be perfect parts of eternal unrelief.

a great machine, having a slumber of constant repetition. Let Gerald! Could he fold her in his arms and sheathe her in Gerald manage his firm. There he would be satisfied, as satis-sleep? Ha! He needed putting to sleep himself—poor Gerald.

fied as a wheelbarrow that goes backwards and forwards along That was all he needed. What did he do, he made the burden a plank all day—she had seen it.

for her greater, the burden of her sleep was the more intoler-The wheelbarrow—the one humble wheel—the unit of able, when he was there. He was an added weariness upon her the firm. Then the cart, with two wheels; then the truck, with unripening nights, her unfruitful slumbers. Perhaps he got four; then the donkey-engine, with eight, then the winding-

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engine, with sixteen, and so on, till it came to the miner, with his life been in terror of the nights that should come, when he a thousand wheels, and then the electrician, with three thou-could not sleep. He knew that this would be too much for sand, and the underground manager, with twenty thousand, him, to have to face nights of sleeplessness and of horrified and the general manager with a hundred thousand little wheels watching the hours.

working away to complete his make-up, and then Gerald, with So he sat for hours in bed, like a statue, reading. His mind, a million wheels and cogs and axles.

hard and acute, read on rapidly, his body understood noth-Poor Gerald, such a lot of little wheels to his make-up! He ing. In a state of rigid unconsciousness, he read on through was more intricate than a chronometer-watch. But oh heav-the night, till morning, when, weary and disgusted in spirit, ens, what weariness! What weariness, God above! A chro-disgusted most of all with himself, he slept for two hours.

nometer-watch—a beetle—her soul fainted with utter ennui, Then he got up, hard and full of energy. Gudrun scarcely from the thought. So many wheels to count and consider and spoke to him, except at coffee when she said: calculate! Enough, enough—there was an end to man's ca-

'I shall be leaving tomorrow.'

pacity for complications, even. Or perhaps there was no end.

'We will go together as far as Innsbruck, for appearance's Meanwhile Gerald sat in his room, reading. When Gudrun sake?' he asked.

was gone, he was left stupefied with arrested desire. He sat on

'Perhaps,' she said.

the side of the bed for an hour, stupefied, little strands of She said 'Perhaps' between the sips of her coffee. And the consciousness appearing and

reappearing. But he did not move, sound of her taking her breath in the word, was nauseous to for a long time he remained inert, his head dropped on his him. He rose quickly to be away from her.

breast.

He went and made arrangements for the departure on the Then he looked up and realised that he was going to bed.

morrow. Then, taking some food, he set out for the day on the He was cold. Soon he was lying down in the dark.

skis. Perhaps, he said to the Wirt, he would go up to the But what he could not bear was the darkness. The solid Marienhutte, perhaps to the village below.

darkness confronting him drove him mad. So he rose, and To Gudrun this day was full of a promise like spring. She made a light. He remained seated for a while, staring in front.

felt an approaching release, a new fountain of life rising up in He did not think of Gudrun, he did not think of anything.

her. It gave her pleasure to dawdle through her packing, it Then suddenly he went downstairs for a book. He had all gave her pleasure to dip into books, to try on her different

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garments, to look at herself in the glass. She felt a new lease of bat. But in his figure, in the greeny loden suit, he looked life was come upon her, and she was happy like a child, very CHETIF and puny, still strangely different from the rest.

attractive and beautiful to everybody, with her soft, luxuriant He had taken a little toboggan, for the two of them, and figure, and her happiness. Yet underneath was death itself.

they trudged between the blinding slopes of snow, that burned In the afternoon she had to go out with Loerke. Her to-their now hardening faces, laughing in an endless sequence of morrow was perfectly vague before her. This was what gave quips and jests and polyglot fancies. The fancies were the her pleasure. She might be going to England with Gerald, reality to both of them, they were both so happy, tossing about she might be going to Dresden with Loerke, she might be the little coloured balls of verbal humour and whimsicality.

going to Munich, to a girl-friend she had there. Anything Their natures seemed to sparkle in full interplay, they were might come to pass on the morrow. And today was the white, enjoying a pure game. And they wanted to keep it on the snowy iridescent threshold of all possibility. All possibility—level of a game, their relationship: SUCH a fine game.

that was the charm to her, the lovely, iridescent, indefinite Loerke did not take the toboganning very seriously. He charm,—pure illusion All possibility —because death was in-put no fire and intensity into it, as Gerald did. Which pleased evitable, and NOTHING was possible but death.

Gudrun. She was weary, oh so weary of Gerald's gripped in-She did not want things to materialise, to take any defi-tensity of physical motion. Loerke let the sledge go wildly, nite shape. She wanted, suddenly, at one moment of the jour-and gaily, like a flying leaf, and when, at a bend, he pitched ney tomorrow, to be wafted into an utterly new course, by both her and him out into the snow, he only waited for them some utterly unforeseen event, or motion. So that, although both to pick themselves up unhurt off the keen

white ground, she wanted to go out with Loerke for the last time into the to be laughing and pert as a pixie. She knew he would be snow, she did not want to be serious or businesslike.

making ironical, playful remarks as he wandered in hell—if And Loerke was not a serious figure. In his brown velvet he were in the humour. And that pleased her immensely. It cap, that made his head as round as a chestnut, with the brown-seemed like a rising above the dreariness of actuality, the movelvet flaps loose and wild over his ears, and a wisp of elf-like, notony of contingencies.

thin black hair blowing above his full, elf-like dark eyes, the They played till the sun went down, in pure amusement, shiny, transparent brown skin crinkling up into odd grimaces careless and timeless. Then, as the little sledge twirled riskily on his small-featured face, he looked an odd little boy-man, a to rest at the bottom of the slope, **Contents**



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'Wait!' he said suddenly, and he produced from somewhere she drank tiny sips of the Heidelbeerwasser, she ate the cold, a large thermos flask, a packet of Keks, and a bottle of sweet, creamy wafers. How good everything was! How per-Schnapps.

fect everything tasted and smelled and sounded, here in this

'Oh Loerke,' she cried. 'What an inspiration! What a utter stillness of snow and falling twilight.

COMBLE DE JOIE INDEED! What is the Schnapps?'

'You are going away tomorrow?' his voice came at last.

He looked at it, and laughed.

'Yes.'

'Heidelbeer!' he said.

There was a pause, when the evening seemed to rise in its

'No! From the bilberries under the snow. Doesn't it look as silent, ringing pallor infinitely high, to the infinite which was if it were distilled from snow. Can you—' she sniffed, and near at hand.

sniffed at the bottle—'can you smell bilberries? Isn't it won-

'WOHIN?'

derful? It is exactly as if one could smell them through the That was the question—WOHIN? Whither? WOHIN?

snow.'

What a lovely word! She NEVER wanted it answered. Let it She stamped her foot lightly on the ground. He kneeled chime for ever.

down and whistled, and put his ear to the snow. As he did so

'I don't know,' she said, smiling at him.

his black eyes twinkled up.

He caught the smile from her.

'Ha! Ha!' she laughed, warmed by the whimsical way in

'One never does,' he said.

which he mocked at her verbal extravagances. He was always

'One never does,' she repeated.

teasing her, mocking her ways. But as he in his mockery was There was a silence, wherein he ate biscuits rapidly, as a even more absurd than she in her extravagances, what could rabbit eats leaves.

one do but laugh and feel liberated.

'But,' he laughed, 'where will you take a ticket to?'

She could feel their voices, hers and his, ringing silvery

'Oh heaven!' she cried. 'One must take a ticket.'

like bells in the frozen, motionless air of the first twilight.

Here was a blow. She saw herself at the wicket, at the rail-How perfect it was, how VERY perfect it was, this silvery way station. Then a relieving thought came to her. She isolation and interplay.

breathed freely.

She sipped the hot coffee, whose fragrance flew around

'But one needn't go,' she cried.

them like bees murmuring around flowers, in the snowy air,

'Certainly not,' he said.

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'I mean one needn't go where one's ticket says.'

To Gerald, the smallish, odd figure of the German was That struck him. One might take a ticket, so as not to distinct and objective, as if seen through field glasses. And he travel to the destination it indicated. One might break off, disliked the small figure exceedingly, he wanted it removed.

and avoid the destination. A point located. That was an idea!

Then Loerke rattled the box which held the biscuits.

'Then take a ticket to London,' he said. 'One should never

'Biscuits there are still,' he said.

go there.'

And reaching from his seated posture in the sledge, he

'Right,' she answered.

handed them to Gudrun. She fumbled, and took one. He He poured a little coffee into a tin can.

would have held them to Gerald, but Gerald so definitely did

'You won't tell me where you will go?' he asked.

not want to be offered a biscuit, that Loerke, rather vaguely,

'Really and truly,' she said, 'I don't know. It depends which put the box aside. Then he took up the small bottle, and held way the wind blows.'

it to the light.

He looked at her quizzically, then he pursed up his lips,

'Also there is some Schnapps,' he said to himself.

like Zephyrus, blowing across the snow.

Then suddenly, he elevated the battle gallantly in the air,

'It goes towards Germany,' he said.

a strange, grotesque figure leaning towards Gudrun, and said:

'I believe so,' she laughed.

'Gnadiges Fraulein,' he said, 'wohl—'

Suddenly, they were aware of a vague white figure near There was a crack, the bottle was flying, Loerke had started them. It was Gerald. Gudrun's heart leapt in sudden terror, back, the three stood quivering in violent emotion.

profound terror. She rose to her feet.

Loerke turned to Gerald, a devilish leer on his bright-

'They told me where you were,' came Gerald's voice, like a skinned face.

judgment in the whitish air of twilight.

'Well done!' he said, in a satirical demoniac frenzy. 'C'est

'MARIA! You come like a ghost,' exclaimed Loerke.

le sport, sans doute.'

Gerald did not answer. His presence was unnatural and The next instant he was sitting ludicrously in the snow, ghostly to them.

Gerald's fist having rung against the side of his head. But Loerke shook the flask—then he held it inverted over the Loerke pulled himself together, rose, quivering, looking full snow. Only a few brown drops trickled out.

at Gerald, his body weak and furtive, but his eyes demoniacal

'All gone!' he said.

with satire.

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'Vive le heros, vive—'

movement became softer, appeased.

But he flinched, as, in a black flash Gerald's fist came upon Loerke roused himself on the snow, too dazed and hurt to him, banged into the other side of his head, and sent him get up. Only his eyes were conscious.

aside like a broken straw.

'Monsieur!' he said, in his thin, roused voice: 'Quand vous But Gudrun moved forward. She raised her clenched hand aurez fini—'

high, and brought it down, with a great downward stroke on A revulsion of contempt and disgust came over Gerald's to the face and on to the breast of

Gerald.

soul. The disgust went to the very bottom of him, a nausea.

A great astonishment burst upon him, as if the air had Ah, what was he doing, to what depths was he letting himself broken. Wide, wide his soul opened, in wonder, feeling the go! As if he cared about her enough to kill her, to have her life pain. Then it laughed, turning, with strong hands outstretched, on his hands!

at last to take the apple of his desire. At last he could finish A weakness ran over his body, a terrible relaxing, a thaw, a his desire.

decay of strength. Without knowing, he had let go his grip, He took the throat of Gudrun between his hands, that and Gudrun had fallen to her knees. Must he see, must he were hard and indomitably powerful. And her throat was know?

beautifully, so beautifully soft, save that, within, he could feel A fearful weakness possessed him, his joints were turned the slippery chords of her life. And this he crushed, this he to water. He drifted, as on a wind, veered, and went drifting could crush. What bliss! Oh what bliss, at last, what satisfac-away.

tion, at last! The pure zest of satisfaction filled his soul. He

'I didn't want it, really,' was the last confession of disgust was watching the unconsciousness come unto her swollen face, in his soul, as he drifted up the slope, weak, finished, only watching the eyes roll back. How ugly she was! What a sheering off unconsciously from any further contact. 'I've had fulfilment, what a satisfaction! How good this was, oh how enough—I want to go to sleep. I've had enough.' He was sunk good it was, what a God-given gratification, at last! He was under a sense of nausea.

unconscious of her fighting and struggling. The struggling He was weak, but he did not want to rest, he wanted to go was her reciprocal lustful passion in this embrace, the more on and on, to the end. Never again to stay, till he came to the violent it became, the greater the frenzy of delight, till the end, that was

all the desire that remained to him. So he drifted zenith was reached, the crisis, the struggle was overborne, her on and on, unconscious and weak, not thinking of anything, **Contents**



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so long as he could keep in action.

thing higher in front. Always higher, always higher. He knew The twilight spread a weird, unearthly light overhead, blu-he was following the track towards the summit of the slopes, ish-rose in colour, the cold blue night sank on the snow. In where was the marienhutte, and the descent on the other side.

the valley below, behind, in the great bed of snow, were two But he was not really conscious. He only wanted to go on, to small figures: Gudrun dropped on her knees, like one ex-go on whilst he could, to move, to keep going, that was all, to ecuted, and Loerke sitting propped up near her. That was all.

keep going, until it was finished. He had lost all his sense of Gerald stumbled on up the slope of snow, in the bluish place. And yet in the remaining instinct of life, his feet sought darkness, always climbing, always unconsciously climbing, the track where the skis had gone.

weary though he was. On his left was a steep slope with black He slithered down a sheer snow slope. That frightened rocks and fallen masses of rock and veins of snow slashing in him. He had no alpenstock, nothing. But having come safely and about the blackness of rock, veins of snow slashing vaguely to rest, he began to walk on, in the illuminated darkness. It in and

about the blackness of rock. Yet there was no sound, all was as cold as sleep. He was between two ridges, in a hollow.

this made no noise.

So he swerved. Should he climb the other ridge, or wander To add to his difficulty, a small bright moon shone bril-along the hollow? How frail the thread of his being was liantly just ahead, on the right, a painful brilliant thing that stretched! He would perhaps climb the ridge. The snow was was always there, unremitting, from which there was no es-firm and simple. He went along. There was something stand-cape. He wanted so to come to the end—he had had enough.

ing out of the snow. He approached, with dimmest curiosity.

Yet he did not sleep.

It was a half-buried Crucifix, a little Christ under a little He surged painfully up, sometimes having to cross a slope sloping hood, at the top of a pole. He sheered away. Some-of black rock, that was blown bare of snow. Here he was afraid body was going to murder him. He had a great dread of being of falling, very much afraid of falling. And high up here, on murdered. But it was a dread which stood outside him, like the crest, moved a wind that almost overpowered him with a his own ghost.

sleep-heavy iciness. Only it was not here, the end, and he Yet why be afraid? It was bound to happen. To be mur-must still go on. His indefinite nausea would not let him dered! He looked round in terror at the snow, the rocking, stay.

pale, shadowy slopes of the upper world. He was bound to be Having gained one ridge, he saw the vague shadow of some-murdered, he could see it. This was the moment when the

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death was uplifted, and there was no escape.

Lord Jesus, was it then bound to be—Lord Jesus! He could feel the blow descending, he knew he was murdered. Vaguely wandering forward, his hands lifted as if to feel what would happen, he was waiting for the moment when he would stop, when it would cease. It was not over yet.

He had come to the hollow basin of snow, surrounded by sheer slopes and precipices, out of which rose a track that brought one to the top of the mountain. But he wandered unconsciously, till he slipped and fell down, and as he fell something broke in his soul, and immediately he went to sleep.

Chapter 31.

Exeunt.

When they brought the body home, the next morning, Gudrun was shut up in her room. From her window she saw men coming along with a burden, over the snow. She sat still and let the minutes go by.

There came a tap at her door. She opened. There stood a woman, saying softly, oh, far too reverently:

'They have found him, madam!'

'Il est mort?'

'Yes—hours ago.'

Gudrun did not know what to say. What should she say?

What should she feel? What should she do? What did they expect of her? She was coldly at a loss.

'Thank you,' she said, and she shut the door of her room.

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The woman went away mortified. Not a word, not a tear—

or feel until she had got away, till she was loosed from this ha! Gudrun was cold, a cold woman.

position.

Gudrun sat on in her room, her face pale and impassive.

The day passed, the next day came. She heard the sledge, What was she to do? She could not weep and make a scene.

saw Ursula and Birkin alight, and she shrank from these also.

She could not alter herself. She sat motionless, hiding from Ursula came straight up to her.

people. Her one motive was to avoid actual contact with events.

'Gudrun!' she cried, the tears running down her cheeks.

She only wrote out a long telegram to Ursula and Birkin.

And she took her sister in her arms. Gudrun hid her face on In the afternoon, however, she rose suddenly to look for Ursula's shoulder, but still she could not escape the cold devil Loerke. She glanced with apprehension at the door of the of irony that froze her soul.

room that had been Gerald's. Not for worlds would she enter

'Ha, ha!' she thought, 'this is the right behaviour.'

there.

But she could not weep, and the sight of her cold, pale, She found Loerke sitting alone in the lounge. She went impassive face soon stopped the fountain of Ursula's tears. In straight up to him.

a few moments, the sisters had nothing to say to each other.

'It isn't true, is it?' she said.

'Was it very vile to be dragged back here again?' Gudrun He looked up at her. A small smile of misery twisted his asked at length.

face. He shrugged his shoulders.

Ursula looked up in some bewilderment.

'True?' he echoed.

'I never thought of it,' she said.

'We haven't killed him?' she asked.

'I felt a beast, fetching you,' said Gudrun. 'But I simply He disliked her coming to him in such a manner. He raised couldn't see people. That is too much for me.'

his shoulders wearily.

'Yes,' said Ursula, chilled.

'It has happened,' he said.

Birkin tapped and entered. His face was white and ex-She looked at him. He sat crushed and frustrated for the pressionless. She knew he knew. He gave her his hand, saying: time being, quite as emotionless and barren as herself. My

'The end of THIS trip, at any rate.'

God! this was a barren tragedy, barren, barren.

Gudrun glanced at him, afraid.

She returned to her room to wait for Ursula and Birkin.

There was silence between the three of them, nothing to She wanted to get away, only to get away. She could not think be said. At length Ursula asked in a small voice:

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'Have you seen him?'

hate. It would be simpler for them.

He looked back at Ursula with a hard, cold look, and did Birkin went away, his manner cold and abstracted. But not trouble to answer.

she knew he would do things for her, nevertheless, he would

'Have you seen him?' she repeated.

see her through. She smiled slightly to herself, with contempt.

'I have,' he said, coldly.

Let him do the work, since he was so extremely GOOD at Then he looked at Gudrun.

looking after other people.

'Have you done anything?' he said.

Birkin went again to Gerald. He had loved him. And yet

'Nothing,' she replied, 'nothing.'

he felt chiefly disgust at the inert body lying there. It was so She shrank in cold disgust from making any statement.

inert, so coldly dead, a carcase, Birkin's bowels seemed to turn

'Loerke says that Gerald came to you, when you were sit-to ice. He had to stand and look at the frozen dead body that ting on the sledge at the bottom of the Rudelbahn, that you had been Gerald.

had words, and Gerald walked away. What were the words It was the frozen carcase of a dead male. Birkin remem-about? I had better know, so that I can satisfy the authorities, bered a rabbit which he had once found frozen like a board if necessary.'

on the snow. It had been rigid like a dried board when he Gudrun looked up

at him, white, childlike, mute with picked it up. And now this was Gerald, stiff as a board, curled trouble.

up as if for sleep, yet with the horrible hardness somehow

'There weren't even any words,' she said. 'He knocked evident. It filled him with horror. The room must be made Loerke down and stunned him, he half strangled me, then he warm, the body must be thawed. The limbs would break like went away.'

glass or like wood if they had to be straightened.

To herself she was saying:

He reached and touched the dead face. And the sharp,

'A pretty little sample of the eternal triangle!' And she heavy bruise of ice bruised his living bowels. He wondered if turned ironically away, because she knew that the fight had he himself were freezing too, freezing from the inside. In the been between Gerald and herself and that the presence of the short blond moustache the life-breath was frozen into a block third party was a mere contingency—an inevitable contin-of ice, beneath the silent nostrils. And this was Gerald!

gency perhaps, but a contingency none the less. But let them Again he touched the sharp, almost glittering fair hair of have it as an example of the eternal triangle, the trinity of the frozen body. It was icy-cold, hair icy-cold, almost venom-

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ous. Birkin's heart began to freeze. He had loved Gerald. Now Marienhutte, and found shelter. He might have gone on, down he looked at the shapely, strange-coloured face, with the small, the steep, steep fall of the south-side, down into the dark fine, pinched nose and the manly cheeks, saw it frozen like an valley with its pines, on to the great Imperial road leading ice-pebble—yet he had loved it. What was one to think or south to Italy.

feel? His brain was beginning to freeze, his blood was turn-He might! And what then? The Imperial road! The south?

ing to ice-water. So cold, so cold, a heavy, bruising cold press-Italy? What then? Was it a way out? It was only a way in ing on his arms from outside, and a heavier cold congealing again. Birkin stood high in the painful air, looking at the peaks, within him, in his heart and in his bowels.

and the way south. Was it any good going south, to Italy?

He went over the snow slopes, to see where the death had Down the old, old Imperial road?

been. At last he came to the great shallow among the preci-He turned away. Either the heart would break, or cease to pices and slopes, near the summit of the pass. It was a grey care. Best cease to care. Whatever the mystery which has day, the third day of greyness and stillness. All was white, icy, brought forth man and the universe, it is a non-human mys-pallid, save for the scoring of black rocks that jutted like roots tery, it has its own great ends, man is not the criterion. Best sometimes, and sometimes were in naked faces. In the disleave it all to the vast, creative, non-human mystery. Best strive tance a slope sheered down from a peak, with many black with oneself only, not with the universe.

rock-slides.

'God cannot do without man.' It was a saying of some It was like a shallow

pot lying among the stone and snow great French religious teacher. But surely this is false. God of the upper world. In this pot Gerald had gone to sleep. At can do without man. God could do without the ichthyosauri the far end, the guides had driven iron stakes deep into the and the mastodon. These monsters failed creatively to de-snow-wall, so that, by means of the great rope attached, they velop, so God, the creative mystery, dispensed with them. In could haul themselves up the massive snow-front, out on to the same way the mystery could dispense with man, should the jagged summit of the pass, naked to heaven, where the he too fail creatively to change and develop. The eternal cre-Marienhutte hid among the naked rocks. Round about, spiked, ative mystery could dispose of man, and replace him with a slashed snow-peaks pricked the heaven.

finer created being. Just as the horse has taken the place of the Gerald might have found this rope. He might have hauled mastodon.

himself up to the crest. He might have heard the dogs in the It was very consoling to Birkin, to think this. If humanity

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ran into a CUL DE SAC and expended itself, the timeless be tragic, to make situations—it was all too late. Best be quiet, creative mystery would bring forth some other being, finer, and bear one's soul in patience and in fullness.

more wonderful, some new, more lovely race, to carry on the But when he

went in again, at evening, to look at Gerald embodiment of creation. The game was never up. The mys-between the candles, because of his heart's hunger, suddenly tery of creation was fathomless, infallible, inexhaustible, for-his heart contracted, his own candle all but fell from his hand, ever. Races came and went, species passed away, but ever new as, with a strange whimpering cry, the tears broke out. He sat species arose, more lovely, or equally lovely, always surpassing down in a chair, shaken by a sudden access. Ursula who had wonder. The fountain-head was incorruptible and followed him, recoiled aghast from him, as he sat with sunken unsearchable. It had no limits. It could bring forth miracles, head and body convulsively shaken, making a strange, hor-create utter new races and new species, in its own hour, new rible sound of tears.

forms of consciousness, new forms of body, new units of be-

'I didn't want it to be like this—I didn't want it to be like ing. To be man was as nothing compared to the possibilities this,' he cried to himself. Ursula could but think of the Kaiser's: of the creative mystery. To have one's pulse beating direct 'Ich habe as nicht gewollt.' She looked almost with horror on from the mystery, this was perfection, unutterable satisfac-Birkin.

tion. Human or inhuman mattered nothing. The perfect pulse Suddenly he was silent. But he sat with his head dropped, throbbed with indescribable being, miraculous unborn spe-to hide his face. Then furtively he wiped his face with his cies.

fingers. Then suddenly he lifted his head, and looked straight Birkin went home again to Gerald. He went into the room, at Ursula, with dark, almost vengeful eyes.

and sat down on the bed. Dead, dead and cold!

'He should have loved me,' he said. 'I offered him.'

She, afraid, white, with mute lips answered: Imperial Caesar dead, and turned to clay

'What difference would it have made!'

Would stop a hole to keep the wind away.

'It would!' he said. 'It would.'

There was no response from that which had been Gerald.

He forgot her, and turned to look at Gerald. With head Strange, congealed, icy substance—no more. No more!

oddly lifted, like a man who draws his head back from an Terribly weary, Birkin went away, about the day's busi-insult, half haughtily, he watched the cold, mute, material ness. He did it all quietly, without bother. To rant, to rave, to face. It had a bluish cast. It sent a shaft like ice through the **Contents**



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heart of the living man. Cold, mute, material! Birkin remem-

'Haven't you seen enough?' she said.

bered how once Gerald had clutched his hand, with a warm, He got up.

momentaneous grip of final love. For one second—then let

'It's a bitter thing to me,' he said.

go again, let go for ever. If he had kept true to that clasp,

'What—that he's dead?' she said.

death would not have mattered. Those who die, and dying His eyes just met hers. He did not answer.

still can love, still believe, do not die. They live still in the

'You've got me,' she said.

beloved. Gerald might still have been living in the spirit with He smiled and kissed her.

Birkin, even after death. He might have lived with his friend,

'If I die,' he said, 'you'll know I haven't left you.'

a further life.

'And me?' she cried.

But now he was dead, like clay, like bluish, corruptible ice.

'And you won't have left me,' he said. 'We shan't have any Birkin looked at the pale fingers, the inert mass. He remem-need to despair, in death.'

bered a dead stallion he had seen: a dead mass of maleness, She took hold of his hand.

repugnant. He remembered also the beautiful face of one whom

'But need you despair over Gerald?' she said.

he had loved, and who had died still having the faith to yield

'Yes,' he answered.

to the mystery. That dead face was beautiful, no one could They went away. Gerald was taken to England, to be bur-call it cold, mute, material. No one could remember it withied. Birkin and Ursula accompanied the body, along with one out gaining faith in the mystery, without the soul's warming of Gerald's brothers. It was the Crich brothers and sisters with new, deep life-

trust.

who insisted on the burial in England. Birkin wanted to leave And Gerald! The denier! He left the heart cold, frozen, the dead man in the Alps, near the snow. But the family was hardly able to beat. Gerald's father had looked wistful, to break strident, loudly insistent.

the heart: but not this last terrible look of cold, mute Matter.

Gudrun went to Dresden. She wrote no particulars of her-Birkin watched and watched.

self. Ursula stayed at the Mill with Birkin for a week or two.

Ursula stood aside watching the living man stare at the They were both very quiet.

frozen face of the dead man. Both faces were unmoved and

'Did you need Gerald?' she asked one evening.

unmoving. The candle-flames flickered in the frozen air, in

'Yes,' he said.

the intense silence.

'Aren't I enough for you?' she asked.

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'No,' he said. 'You are enough for me, as far as a woman is concerned. You are all women to me. But I wanted a man friend, as eternal as you and I are eternal.'

'Why aren't I enough?' she said. 'You are enough for me. I don't want anybody else but you. Why isn't it the same with you?'

'Having you, I can live all my life without anybody else, any other sheer intimacy. But to make it complete, really happy, I wanted eternal union with a man too: another kind of love,' he said.

'I don't believe it,' she said. 'It's an obstinacy, a theory, a perversity.'

'Well—' he said.

'You can't have two kinds of love. Why should you!'

It seems as if I can't,' he said. 'Yet I wanted it.'

'You can't have it, because it's false, impossible,' she said.

'I don't believe that,' he answered.

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