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The Noises That Weren't There Chapter III & IV

Charles Williams

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The Noises That Weren't There Chapter III & IV

Abstract

Initial chapters of an unfinished novel by Williams.

Additional Keywords

Williams, Charles. *The Noises That Weren't There*

The NOISES THAT WEREN'T THERE

by Charles Williams

Third and Final Chapter of the Unfinished Manuscript



When they were in the flat she turned to him. 'Richard,' she said, 'your're in danger. I think I did wrong to ask you to come.'

He stood and looked at her; then he said with a lightness which contrasted with her gravity: 'Well, you can't leave it at that, can you? Tell me, and perhaps we can do something to dodge the danger - or defeat it.'

She said: 'I've been something like a fool... Can you still hear the rat squeaking?'

'A kind of echo in my ears,' he admitted. 'But I thought it was only an auditory hang-over. Ought I to suppose it to be anything more?'

She drew a deep breath, and motioned to him; they sat down. She said: 'I hope you'll be able to believe this, because then we can do something. All that we've been seeing and hearing is quite real.'

'I haven't been seeing anything' he put in mildly.

'Well, perhaps not,' she said. 'But you've heard the noises, and felt the floor swing. And I saw... never mind.'

A slight shudder took her; she quieted herself and went on: 'What you heard was real, though not in the way you heard it. Something is going on; something useless and futile, however shocking; something behind our senses. But we hear it or feel it through our senses, and what we hear or feel is the kind of thing it's most like of all we've ever known or imagined. Besides, you did see something; you saw the heap of sand. Shall I tell you what it was? I warn you it'll

sound silly, but if I were you I wouldn't be too sure that it's so very silly. That was the devil trying to make a body.'

Richard looked at her. She was leaning forward, a little pale, her eyes fixed intently on his. But there was still about her something of the power of light he had seen in her at dinner. Her pallor was not a lack of colour; it was itself a power and hinted a translucency. Her voice was quiet and strong. It would be an exaggeration to say that he did not believe in the devil; never in his whole life had he supposed the word 'devil' to have any serious meaning. Nor did he now, though he saw that to her, so looking and speaking, it had a very serious meaning; and so with the other phrase - 'trying to make a body'. The whole sentence would have been gibberish, if any other than she had spoken it, in any other then and there. It was the single fact of her which held him, for the necessary few seconds, silent, grave, attentive. She had paused, without relaxing, for those few seconds, and before he had stirred she was again speaking.

'I think that may sound nonsense to you. It isn't. Forget the words, if you like; only think of what they might mean. Think of everything that's happened, and tell me if it mightn't mean something like that, even to you. Think of the heap of sand you saw there, what it was like and how it moved - you said it moved! - and then you saw it was the shape of a body, didn't you? And what happened? You know; you've got it all typed out, all signed and dated. It couldn't bear the steel. No, because it wasn't a body; it wasn't a



girl at all. It was pretended flesh, made of motes of dust and water and blown air, all gathered together and held together, and to be pushed out into the world, but for some reason it wasn't good enough, or perhaps whatever made it lost patience suddenly, and threw it down. That invisible rage exploded like a bomb; it was what you thought was a bomb; there isn't anything else it could so nearly sound like. Why that filthy doll wasn't shattered I don't know; just by chance it wasn't and so it was there to be seen and even lifted and carried about, though at that it wouldn't have lasted long. It wasn't an organism, not even a dead organism; it was only a silly shell. So when it was cut, it dissolved. What else could happen, when there was nothing there to cut up?

As she paused, her vehemence greater for her control, his thought went back to the uncleanness of the thing he had seen in the moonlight. His flesh was faithful and remembered, and was revolted by the memory. His body grew cold, as if the autumn night were changing to winter, or as if the room were touched by a cold beyond the night's. The shrill sound in his ears sang higher in the cold; tearing more fiercely at the ear-drums it was too remote to reach. Her voice had made him forget it, but it had returned. It was still clinging to him, asking him something, worrying like a rat at a rabbit's throat, or his own throat. But it could not reach either ears or throat, for he knew that he was holding himself apart, not answering, letting it happen, almost (in a heart he had not known he had) disdaining it. In that scornful aloofness of his soul, up which, quicker than any rat could, the shrill voice ran and fell, he could believe (however unintelligible the mere words) that the devil was trying to make a human body; it was a code phrase - they used them sometimes in the police - for what was happening. She was right; he assented; and as her voice again took up the tale, found himself assenting to more.

As if conscious of his partial surrender, she modified her vehemence; she spoke now not to compel agreement, but to display facts. 'When I was there this morning,' she said, 'I heard it. It was still snarling and raging because it was disappointed; it had dropped its dirt as the mice do theirs. But there must have been something more than all the rush of rabble - scrimmage of paltry imps and poltergeists. When I told them to be quiet, I alarmed something else. I was foolish not to guess that it might be able to come away from the house - oh I know you can't talk of spirit so, and yet in a way you can. They can't get out of time and place, and they want to; they want to get out or they want to get further in.'

He interrupted her. 'You talk of it and they,' he said, 'but you must go slower. I can't take it in at first. Is this

what you mean by the devil? Is there a devil?'

'Call it what you like,' she said. 'It is a lucifer, fallen and blackened. It is something cold and greedy and hateful and full of malice. You can hear it sometimes sobbing for pure rage - in the stillness when the sounds that are the image of spirits come. Once I saw a remote slimpie of something like it - *fac me saluum, Domine* - and I felt it to-night in that room, the room that seemed to you to be swinging.'

She shrugged a shoulder. 'As near as anything' she said. 'What you felt was that ceaseless moment of something struggling with matter. I know they will tell you it is all energy nowadays; so it may be. But it is still energy doing one kind of thing and not another, or there'd be simply no distinction at all; and what you felt was two kinds of energy meeting. Even to make such a fabric, such a kind of pseudo-organism, as they tried here, they must have a link, and that link must be given them by man. In the old days it was generally a living being - a rat or a dog or a monkey or even a flea. They like that best. But it can be a room or a house or a human being imprisoned in the house. I've known an imbecile used like that, and an old daft woman. If it can get at someone rational who will have dealings with it, it likes that best of all.'

He said, and now in spite of himself his breath came more thickly, and the cold in the room was sharper: 'You mean that there was something there and it's trying to get hold of us?'

'Oh not like that,' she said. 'It'd be a long way for us to the covens and the sabbaths. But it does want you to attend to it, only to attend to it. I said you were in danger, but not seriously; not if you keep your head and are good. It's tiresome and you must be careful.' A faint smile came upon her face. 'Richard, you must be good.'

'I thought,' he said, 'that the devil was there - if there is a devil - to prevent us being good.'

'No doubt he wishes it,' she answered, 'but he wishes his own satisfaction first. He wishes to get into flesh. If you'd read, you'd know; you find the same kind of story everywhere. There are spirits among all the spirits who want above everything what is called incarnation, and the thing that was in that house to-night is one of them. The lowest and most vicious woman who ever walked this earth is a saint compared to that.'

'Well, but, even if it's true, what's so wrong about it?'

Challis asked. She stood up and he also. She said: 'I doubt if I could make you see it. I know you would if you could, but how can you? One can't get used to such ideas all at once. It looks as if, until to-night, I'd hardly taken it quite seriously myself. I knew all about it, but I didn't somehow feel it was a thing we had to reckon with. Now I know it is. But you've not got to bother about that; that's the climax, and that is very far away.'

He turned his eyes from her as she paused, and stood looking down at the carpet. She saw him preoccupied and she too was silent. Under the influence of her words, however little his rational intelligence might approve, the happenings of the last night and day grew into a kind of union. A night and a day ago he had first felt that soundless shock, and then (still shaken by it) he had seen in the moonlight that shape which, while he looked, had been a shape and a body but certainly no real body, for he himself had seen the dusty discolored fluid into which, at the first probe of human intelligence, it had changed; and then that very night, in the same house, he had become aware of that swaying in the void; he or the room? Say, he and the room, for the swaying and swaying was but an image of vibration beyond thought, a knowledge of something otherwise inconceivable, the beating through him of all that had given that house its dark reputation. And then, beyond that, the voice. That, however inarticulate, was still with him; he disdained it still. But now he knew how he held it off, how he remained deliberately silent, how (since the woman beside him had flung a warning at him in a gesture

which was more actual to him still than even her present closeness) he had refused to regard the cry. Was he mad? Was he imagining? Was he caught in some reverberating echo down the nerves of his own body? Or was it real? And therefore was all real, of whatever unforeseen nature the reality might be?

He looked suddenly up at her, and found her eyes fixed on him, full of loving concern. If at that moment she had happened to be preoccupied with anything other, he might still have doubted. He did not doubt. He met her look and relaxed in it; the frank affection which in those eyes certified his own experience eased the impact of experience. He began to speak, and instead found himself yawning; then his eyes began to close and his head to nod. He made an effort to pull himself together; he had, he knew, something of the greatest importance to do or say - or else she had; it was impossible that he should yield to sleep on the very edge of activity. But even while he tried to recover himself and recollect his duty, he swayed upon his feet. 'I... I'm sorry,' he almost grunted. 'I meant... tal' to you... you...' and with an almost superhuman effort he ejaculated: 'You...' and then she caught him. She eased him into a chair; she said: 'all right; I'm here; don't worry.' He felt himself sitting in the chair; he felt again her hand upon his hand, and his hand knowing the companionship, and then between her voice murmuring peace and the recollection of the shrill cry, sleep came. He sank back; he caught the word 'pray' and on that word he lost all consciousness and was securely and happily asleep. Clarissa laid his hand gently down.

The pause that came as sleep to him came to her as prayer. Not only was she less physically tired than he, having been awake less long and being more accustomed to the edge of mystery, but also it was her habit so to seek intermission and repose. Physical sleep was to her more like a lesser and temporary form of that deeper rest. Sleep was necessary and enjoyable; when she slept, she slept more profoundly than most, though also she woke more easily. Something in her took as actual a delight in sleep as she did in friendship or thought or food. But it was normally her prayer that sped her into that delight. She was released from that greater peace to a lesser joy, as if by an indulgence of the Creator to his creatures discovery of his inventions. Prayer certainly was much more than that comforting dispatch; for example, it was the mode by which she chiefly knew her place in the world, and the world in which her predestined place existed. It was for her to choose to live in it; her prayer was her choice, and the life of her choice. That life - once chosen - had other faculties, communications upon which in her daily consciousness she did not dwell, so shyly modest she carried herself to the welcome and the Permission which awaited her there. She thought only: 'Time is, time is past; time is' - the time for what did not seem to be time; the not-seeming time yielding to time. In such a dutiful recognition she did not sway, as Richard Challis had seemed to do, in the passage of a wind, but moved deliberately, healthy and happy in her several occupations. She was long past the earlier buffeting; she walked in her harbour or sailed her seas in equal peace.

Time was not now for any inmost felicity; her prayer, so swiftly established as long habit enabled it to be, must be for more active affairs. She had still in mind her own rashness, as it seemed to her, and she had her apologies for that to offer, since rashness as well as tardiness was a solecism in heaven. It was true she needed no more than a blush to be free of what on earth might need something more formal than a blush - recognition, rebuke, correction. She had involved her companion in more difficulty than she had meant; she must now renew her own effort on his behalf. But she felt first the necessity to spread her knowledge of what was taking place before the lucidity in which all took place.

It was her due to the Divine Omnipotence, but also to the divine Incarnation. But in that place of spirit where the fundament on Incarnation lay, there existed something other

than the divine movement towards earth. The records on earth held strange rumours of beings at odds with their own nature and bitterly covetous of another. The great religions - and not the Christian alone - held a tale of pure intellectualisms existing in that great manner which is called angelic, which desired to thrust into that other manner which is called human. That world of spirit in which angelic movement lives was no mere fantasy to Clarissa; she was conscious of it not only by her beliefs, but by something of her experience. Certainly her experience was of a tiny kind; she had not seen those lines of fiery pattern in which the angelicals subsist. She had not, like the Bearer of the Incarnation, talked face to face with the glory which is Gabriel; she had not, like the Jewish prophet, seen the condescended vision of those hexapterotic creatures who adore the exhibited Presidency of all creation; nor even glimpsed those lesser virilities which, so radiating light that they seem to mortal eyes to be actually clothed in white, hover from time to time within the measures of this world. Once indeed, upon some occasion of her own, she had seen at a remote distance, a flash of molten brightness; once, by the death-bed of her father, she had smelt what seemed the fragrance of beatitude. But she did not dare dwell on these moments, and the angelicals had not otherwise disclosed themselves. They remained in their proper places, aloof in all but love.

It was not so with those others. In the sacred books of religion, in the records of magic and witchcraft, in the writings of learned doctors, the same idea recurred. In the Jewish scriptures it was said that 'the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair' - 'videntes filii Dei filias hominum quod essent pulchrae, acceperunt sibi uxores' - 'they took them wives of all which they chose'. Certain of the angelic watchers of the Uncreated Glory turned their eyes with overmuch desire to the created glory. Clarissa knew very well that this might mean much more than it literally said. 'Sons of God', 'daughters of men', were esoteric phrases; and the state of man when such things were said was different from his state to-day. It was held by some writers that the desire of those spiritual Watchers was for earth rather than for the women of earth; that they desired to inhabit material creation. It was certainly true that those divine existences could not love, even erotically, as men loved. They loved, in the beginning, intellectually; they loved the principle and the individualizing of the principle; they loved with perhaps an angelic fury, but still angelically. Sin therefore for them must also be angelical, a breach of rational order, an intellectual determination to thrust pattern into pattern, and make of two natures a monstrous and forbidden union. It was this which lay at the back of one tale after another. The apparitions of incubi and succubi meant the ceaseless effort to impregnate or to be impregnated in order that literally inconceivable children should at last be conceived; the orgies of the Sabbaths were the frenzy of the same effort; the attempt to gather young children into covens of witchcraft was in the continual hope of producing some favouring organism; necromancy and the raising of dead bodies was chiefly an attempt to infiltrate into humanity at the moment of decay. There were rumours of this at all times on earth, but they were heard perhaps most clearly in Christendom for they gathered thickest where that other rumour spread on earth as it had in the places of the spirit - that a mortal woman had conceived by the operation of pure spirit, and that her child was man and other than man and more than man. The passion of apostasy multiplied itself since then. These others would be as much. They would be as anomalous as Her of whom the dark records spoke as make a great thing; they would be themselves mortally organic and the root of organisms. Perhaps, after all, that Other had not done it; they were never quite sure. But they would destroy. For whatever of delights in the perversely-willed union they had at first proposed to themselves, at the beginning of this spiritual time, had by now almost disappeared. They were not capa-

ble, whatever they believed, of sensual satisfaction; they could only lust for the cold intellectual glut of satisfied malice, the oppression of men and women by what remained to them of intelligence. Almost every sin known to man is an exaggeration or depreciation of some natural instinct; this was, in its very essence, unnatural. It was exactly the wish of these beings to denaturalize themselves, to break into a different order, to be wholly other than what they were. It was therefore, of all sins, the most blasphemous and the most repugnant to thought, though in itself the most dreadfully simple of all. It was also impossible. These others could not do what their dupes in the covens and the diabolic schools could do. They saw this and it maddened them. They monotonously persevered; all temptation of man was an accident of this primal desire. If they could not be one with matter they would destroy matter; if they could not be human, they would destroy humanity. And in all the long history, there was never a record of success; the fabulous tale of Merlin was the nearest, and that was invented. In all the tumults of all the Sabbaths, when the witch shrieked under the pain of the cold intercourse, there was no true intercourse. In all the pseudo-bodies made of dust and air and water and false fire, there was no body that moved of its own volition or had rational thoughts or uttered with its own mouth a single individual word. But they could not cease, and it was permitted to them for their hour.

All this Clarissa had read and studied, but she had not properly known it till now. Now she did. Both the experiences of the night and her occupation at that moment accentuated the knowledge. In that house - why that house? Why not? The whole effort demanded locality and temporality; it was towards a material here and now. The life of her own spirit, reposing in its peace, saw in the depth of spirit this labour of profane spirit. It saw the pseudo-organism come into being; it saw it flung down. The sense of the swinging room might have been a result of that rage, or it might have been more. Clarissa did not so much see it as know it as the sign of that disunion of what in man was union, the point where spirit and matter met and were not made one, as they were in man. Man was not two things; he was one; he was made in the image and likeness of an energy which could operate as matter or as spirit. But this was different - she had seen -

These thoughts had moved steadily through her mind as she sat, easily but vigilantly, her eyes on Challis and no less attentive to him that her spirit had been rendered into quiescence. But she was now aware that her prayer was deepening. There was, sometimes, a point at which that to which prayer was offered seemed itself to deign to cause alteration. She joined herself to it; a brief formula half-framed itself - *Ethic Tu autem; neque hic Tu* - but before she had thought it, let alone uttered it, it had carried her into a new mode of attention. She found herself looking more seriously at her companion. He was asleep, but uneasily; now and then his head jerked, as if he avoided some insect that teased him with a gnat's fidgety persistence. Once or twice he half-raised his head, as if to brush it away, but the hand fell again before it could reach his head, and the whole body twitched. He was breathing heavily, but no sound of even half-formed words came from his lips. She guessed that it was her own charge laid on him which kept him silent; she maintained in him the resistance he himself had made while waking. Her attention hardly paused in that knowledge; she was gently pressed farther. She tasted for a moment an exquisite joy; it was as if some slip of rich goodness melted on her tongue and dissolved into her being. The sweetness was incidental, but afterwards there was a change in her awareness. She was no longer observing her friend from without; indeed she began almost to lose sight of him there, for the image of him as he sat was shaped within her. Her eyes closed as if she too slept, but this, like that all but tangible sweetness was an accident of the quick obedient flesh. The interior image was not a vague likeness; it was the thing itself known more clearly, as facts are known

in prayer. She was herself the continent enclosure of his existence, as he (the knowledge touched her and was gone) might at any other moment be of hers; but how she held, for it was she whose action desired and directed. She saw him sleep more easily; the Protection encompassed him more closely through her. Had he then awaked, he would have seen her smile spring in her face, though he would certainly have thought from her shut eyes and reposing form that she too slept and only smiled in dream. Her wages were paid in advance; the Protection, dealing joy, interkint with her, passed on to the work that earned the joy. For the distress in which he was - and now she wholly lost all consciousness of him outside her containing heart; but it was a heart of which, in that well-known operation, she had often been aware; it was her heart in God - his distress defined itself. She saw the fact. Her single nature, perfectly poised in that Protection, unlike the swinging room, held what that room had differently held.

He lay asleep, and it was not one but two that were there. In his shape, exactly conjoined with his, another lay. She could see, with that double sight of hers, now the one and now the other, and though to her physical eyes there would have been no difference, yet she knew there was a difference. The face was dimmer; the body thicker; the lips moved. She remained concentrated on that two-in-one; and as if her more calm contemplation of it grew presently unbearable, as if it could not endure the steady gaze of certain knowledge, presently the double body began to change. A darkness, almost a small cloud, rose from it, and floated sideways, and was gathered into itself and dwindled. Richards own nature showed again, defined and human in his repose. Beside him stood at last the other shape. She saw it as what it wanted to be, or at least the nearest it could become to what it wanted to be, a form standing by the sleeping man. It was not much higher than his head as he sat, and its apparent mouth was set by his ear. It was clumsy and ill-proportioned; its head was too large, and its hands and feet. She knew - or rather the Protection that held her knew, and she only by derived knowledge; her knowledge came to being and only lived in that continuous action of blessing back the Protection which she felt - she knew that this shape was not even of the consistency of the body in the house. It was not, in any strict sense, yet properly concocted at all. The motion with which its head turned from side to side was not an action; it wobbled incapably on its blackish trunk; she could not see a neck. It was trying to be still, and every now and then by what seemed a great effort it succeeded, and then it obviously muttered in Richards ear, but presently the effort failed and the head began again to shake and the whole body to tremble. Clarissa's knowledge of it was intensely repugnant to her, but only with an outer repugnance; she disliked it as she disliked muddle and mess and filth - no more. She was compelled to the awareness and had no choice, or so it then seemed to her, though even then in her living soul she knew that that sense of compulsion was a dispensation of the Mercy which would not burden her - so young and so inept in its glory - with a full knowledge of her soul's consent; let her feel it all now to be fate and presently she should find it had been choice.

The sweetness that had been on her tongue and had melted into her whole being had lingered. But almost as if he relished this offensiveness it began to leave her, and the offensiveness grew. Her nostrils twitched; her mouth was twisted with a bitterness into which her knowledge seemed to condense. Her face grimaced; her body shook. She was now aware only of this, for a second change had come upon her prayer. The Protection itself - or her sense of it - withdrew. As that happened, the shape before her solidified. As if a more expert damnation had taken charge, the dwarfish form grew up to nearly normal size. Its proportions lessened. It was not monstrous now to sight; only that bitterness in her mouth grew almost intolerable. The seeming man whose back she could see seemed to become aware of her. He lifted his head and turned.

He was very dark, but it was a darkness rather of paint than of flesh. Where the light in her brother's pictures seemed to be something more than paint, and had about it that divine deception - if it is a deception - by which great art seems to be more than art, this seemed to be even less than normal colour. It looked not only flat and dead but also 'put on'. The head was a little longer than normal, so were the feet and hands, but nothing like the first monstrosity. Yet the slight enlargement was almost more creepily repulsive than the earlier apparition had been. This was not flagrantly wrong; it was wrong because it was not quite right; it was natural to it to be a little wrong; its nature was to be unnatural. The sense of bitterness nauseated her whole being. Its eyelids were grey and thick and almost closed, but they were slowly opening, though there seemed even then to be a film over the eyes within. They looked right at her and yet they did not see her; there was no recognition nor consciousness on them. But they remained fixed on her, and she felt herself watching for the living sense in them; at any moment they might see, and she dared not be looking elsewhere when they did. As soon as she realized this, she immediately looked away; it was not for her to be in the very least at the disposal of this cacodemon, whether by its command or its horrid fascination. She looked at the head, held a little to one side; she looked at the hands, raised a little as if to clutch; she looked at the knees, bent a little as if to spring. She could not see Richard, for the cacodemon was between her and him, but she guessed that he still slept in peace. And then suddenly she knew she was looking.

She realized that her own eyes were open, that she was seeing the room and this figure with her ordinary sight. The figure was as objective as the room. It was even clothed. It was wearing a quite ordinary suit of some rough brownish stuff, brown shoes, and a soft brownish shirt. The clothes looked completely real - more real than the pseudo-flesh against them. The thing stood there, with its overprominent eyes fixed on her, but it was not attending to her. It was composing itself. At some moment in those moments, it had emitted one faint squeal, but now its thin lips were compressed, and it was shrugging and jerking itself about, almost as if it were trying to settle into its clothes, but it was not its clothes, it was its flesh it was settling. The head and arms were straightened. The receding chin was re-moulded before her eyes, but from within. The smooth grey hair settled itself as if it were carefully brushed. More and more, it became like an ordinary human being, a visitor, even a guest. The slight deadness of its colour, the slight disproportion of its members, the fixed unintelligence of its eyes, were all that remained to suggest its origin. It took a careful and clumsy step forward. The movement was too much for her; all this while she had controlled herself and remained sitting, as she had been, in her chair, human, vigilant, but confident. But now in a flash she was on her feet.

It stopped after one step; there came from it the beginnings of sounds. At first they had something of that old shrillness about them, but its attention discerned this. It modified what was certainly not its own voice but some kind of mechanical reproduction of a voice. It was making noises in its hollow throat; it seemed to begin one or two sentences and abandon them. At last it got out, with a horrid semblance of friendly intimacy, the phrase: 'They do their work so badly, don't they?' It paused, as if it listened to its own remark, and gave itself a final general shake; then it said, with more assurance, in a voice which was a little harsh but otherwise not unpleasant, and still on a note of confiding intimacy: 'One can never trust one's people in anything.'

Somewhere, far away in the City, a clock struck three; and others followed it. Clarissa took up the challenge of her enemy. She said, as she might have said to a disobedient child or servant: 'You'd better get back, hadn't you?' It was almost impossible for her to avoid speaking directly to the thing, as she would to any human, though she knew that was nonsense. All that was before her was deception. But it was

not worth worrying about; she would only be unnecessarily confused if she sought to maintain the distinction too urgently. The detail that brought it most to her mind was that the lips, though they certainly moved, opened and shut steadily and automatically; they did not correspond to the words. It seemed to be aware of this, and shaped them much more closely to its enunciation when it spoke again. It said: 'Don't be tiresome. Why did you get into my house?'

Clarissa said: 'Perhaps to find you out.' Her voice echoed oddly in the room. In spite of its familiarity, there was a large emptiness in it. She spoke into a void, and she knew what she was saying was useless, if not silly and wrong. She added: 'And in the Name of God'.

At that the figure shivered slightly, as may a man in a sudden draught, but no more, and then as if it were unpleasantly amused it grinned. It said, and by now it had apparently gained complete control of its pseudo-organic body, for the sound of the false voice was much more confident: 'You'll have to do better than that!'

The words came with a clang of something shutting in the void. The cacodemon began to walk towards the door. At first it shuffled a little; then it lifted its feet too high; it nearly lost its balance and wrenched itself back in such a spasm of rage that Clarissa almost expected to see the body lifted and flung down as that other body had been.

— END OF MANUSCRIPT —

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And Then...? Ideas Invited

It is very interesting to speculate what would have had been the development of the rest of the novel if Charles Williams had lived to finish it. We invite you to make your ideas known. In the next issue we will print the ideas of you the readers speculate. We will also print a report on the special panel discussion held at Mythcon II on this unfinished 8th novel. The panel members were: Mary Shideler, Simone Wilson, Glen Peoples and Glen GoodKnight. We came up with some interesting theories. Write in your ideas as soon as possible for inclusion in the next issue.