

Excerpts from *Absalom, Absalom!*

Chapter 1

This was the mother, the dead sister Ellen: this Niobe without tears who had conceived to the demon **in a kind of nightmare**

Chapter 2

Not like a man who had been peacefully ill in bed and had recovered to move **with a sort of diffident and tentative amazement** in a world which he had believed himself on the point of surrendering distinguishable one from another by his beard and eyes alone and only the architect resembling a human creature because of the French clothes which he wore constantly **with a sort of invincible fatality** His guests would bring whiskey out with them but he drank of this **with a sort of sparing calculation** as though keeping mentally, General Compson said, a sort of balance of spiritual solvency

Chapter 3

She postulated the elapsed years during which no honeymoon nor any change had taken place, out of which the (now) five faces looked **with a sort of lifeless and perennial bloom** like painted portraits hung in a vacuum
transmogrified into a mask looking back with passive and hopeless grief upon the irrevocable world, held there not in durance but **in a kind of jeering suspension** by a man who had entered hers and her family's life before she was born

Chapter 4

man a little older than his actual years and enclosed and surrounded **by a sort of Scythian glitter**
the fact that Bon's intention was to commit bigamy but that it was apparently to make his (Henry's) sister **a sort of junior partner** in a harem
Have you noticed how so often when we try to reconstruct the causes which lead up to the actions of men and women, how **with a sort of astonishment** we find ourselves now and then reduced to the belief, the only possible belief, that they stemmed from some of the old virtues?
to become once more for a period without boundaries or location in time, mindless and irrational companion and inmate of a body which, even after four years, **with a sort of dismal and incorruptible fidelity** which is incredibly admirable to me, is still immersed and obviously bemused in recollections of old peace and contentment

Chapter 6

the fierce ruthless constant guardianship of the Negress who, **with a sort of invincible spurious humility** slept on a pallet on the floor
chose for this purpose the last woman on earth he might have hoped to prevail on, this Aunt R—all right all right all right. —that hated him, that had always hated him, yet choosing her **with a kind of outrageous bravado** as if a kind of despairing conviction of his irresistibility or invulnerability were a part of the price he had got for whatever it was he had sold the Credito
as the demon himself had grown old: **with a kind of condensation**, an anguished emergence of the primary indomitable ossification
who, having been born and lived all his life **in a kind of silken prison** lighted by perpetual shaded candles

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Chapter 7

an attenuation from **a kind of furious inertness and patient immobility**, while they sat in the cart outside the doors of doggeries and taverns and waited for the father to drink himself insensible, to a sort of dreamy and destinationless locomotion

realized that his sister was not going to give way to it, that she still walked in the middle of the road **with a sort of sullen implacability**

the other, the getting from the fields into the barricaded house, seemed to have occurred **with a sort of violent abrogation** which must have been almost as short as his telling about it

the one in Alberta, the other in Mississippi; born half a continent apart yet joined, connected after a fashion **in a sort of geographical transubstantiation** by that Continental Trough

And now the whole passel of them from the father through the grown daughters down to one that couldn't even walk yet, slid back down out of the mountains, skating **in a kind of accelerating and sloven and inert coherence** like a useless collection of flotsam on a flooded river

a (you couldn't call it a period because as he remembered it or as he told Grandfather he did, it didn't have either a definite beginning or a definite ending. Maybe attenuation is better)—an attenuation **from a kind of furious inertness and patient immobility**, while they sat in the cart outside the doors of doggeries and taverns and waited for the father to drink himself insensible, **to a sort of dreamy and destinationless locomotion** *[one of each in a single sentence!]*

he certain flat level silent way his older sisters and the other white women of their kind had of looking at niggers, not with fear or dread but **with a kind of speculative antagonism**

Chapter 8

there was something curious in the way they looked at one another, curious and quiet and profoundly intent, not at all as two young men might look at each other but almost as a youth and a very young girl might out of virginity itself—a **sort of hushed and naked searching**

swooping down at him **in a kind of blazing immobility**

maybe afterward just looking at him **with a kind of peaceful and blank surprise**

What is it? something you live and breathe in like air? **a kind of vacuum filled with wraithlike and indomitable anger** and pride and glory at and in happenings that occurred and ceased fifty years ago? **a kind of entailed birthright** father and son and father and son of never forgiving General Sherman, so that forevermore as long as your childrens' children produce children you wont be anything but a descendant of a long line of colonels killed in Pickett's charge at Manassas?

Now she spoke, for the first time since they had left Jefferson, since she had climbed into the buggy **with a kind of clumsy and fumbling and trembling eagerness**

'And now I will have to find it out,' she whimpered, **in a kind of amazed self-pity**.

Excerpts are not necessarily in book order within each chapter listed