

# THE MAN WITHIN

GRAHAM GREENE

"There's another man within me  
that's angry with me."

SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

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# THE MAN WITHIN

## *By Graham Greene*

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

*The Man Within* was the first novel of mine to find a publisher. I had already written two novels, both of which I am thankful to Heinemann's for rejecting. I began this novel in 1926, when I was not quite twenty-two, and it was published with inexplicable success in 1929, so it has now reached the age of its author. The other day I tried to revise it for this edition, but when I had finished my sad and hopeless task, the story remained just as embarrassingly romantic, the style as derivative, and I had eliminated perhaps the only quality it possessed—its youth. So in reprinting not a comma has been altered intentionally. Why reprint then? I can offer no real excuse, but perhaps an author may be allowed one sentimental gesture towards his own past, the period of ambition and hope.

FOR VIVIEN

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## PART I

### CHAPTER I

HE came over the top of the down as the last light failed and could almost have cried with relief at sight of the wood below. He longed to fling himself down on the short stubbly grass and stare at it, the dark comforting shadow which he had hardly hoped to see. Thus only could he cure the stitch in his side, which grew and grew with the jolt, jolt of his stumble down hill. The absence of the cold wind from the sea that had buffeted him for the last half hour seemed like a puff of warm air on his face, as he dropped below the level of the sky. As though the wood were a door swinging on a great hinge, a shadow moved up towards him and the grass under his feet changed from gold to green, to purple and last to a dull grey. Then night came.

A hedge sprang up before his eyes at the distance of a dozen yards. His confused tired senses became aware of the smell of last year's blackberry leaves wet with past rain. For a moment the scent swathed him in a beautiful content and left him with an ache for time in which to rest here. The grass grew longer before he reached the hedge, and a little later his feet were heavy with wet earth and he knew that he was on a path. It was his feet rather than his mind that knew it. They made a rambling progress, now in the muddy centre of the way, now in the grass at the right hand edge, now scraping the outer fringe of the

hedge on the other side. His mind was a confusion of scents and sounds, the far hush of the sea, a memory of rattling pebbles, the smell of the wet leaves and the trampled marl, the salt sweep of the wind that he had left behind on the top of the hill, voices, imaginary footsteps. They were jumbled together like the pieces of a puzzle, and they were half forgotten because of his fatigue and fear.

The fear in his mind told him that paths were dangerous. He whispered it out loud to himself "Dangerous, dangerous", and then because he thought that the low voice must belong to another on the path beside him, he scrambled panic stricken through the hedge. The blackberry twigs plucked at him and tried to hold him with small endearments, twisted small thorns into his clothes with a restraint like a caress, as though they were the fingers of a harlot in a crowded bar. He took no notice and plunged on. The fingers grew angry, slashed at his face with sharp, pointed nails. "Who are you anyhow? Who are you anyhow? Think yourself mighty fine." He heard the voice, shrill and scolding. She had a pretty face and a white skin. "Another day," he said, because he could not wait. He had to leave the town. The last twigs broke and the night became darker under trees. Through the latticing of the leaves half a dozen stars came suddenly to view.

He stumbled against a tree and leant for a moment against it, allowing his legs to relax. Freed from some of the weight of his body, they seemed to ache more than ever. He tried to pull himself together and remember exactly where he was—no longer in Shoreham but in a wood. Had he been followed? He



listened hungry for silence and was rewarded. Had he ever been followed? He had seen Carlyon in the bar of the Sussex Pad, but only in the mirror behind the harlot's head. Carlyon had been standing sideways to him and was ordering a drink. Unless Carlyon saw him leave, he was safe. What a fool he had been to leave so suddenly. He should have gone quietly out and taken the girl with him. Fool, fool, fool, fool, the word droned on in his mind, a sleepy and mechanical reiteration. His eyes closed, then opened with a start, as a twig broke under his own foot. He might have been asleep now in a comfortable bed, all the more comfortable for being shared. She was pretty and had a good skin. He didn't suppose he would have been asleep. . . . He woke again two minutes later feeling cold. He had dreamed that he was again in the bar, looking in the mirror at Carlyon's face, and in the dream the face had begun to turn. But was it only in the dream? He could not stay here and again he began to run, very stumblingly because of the roots of the trees.

Oh, but he was tired, tired, tired. His wrist was hurting and felt damp and weak, slashed by the thorns in the hedge. If Carlyon had suddenly appeared now in front of him, he would have thrown himself down on his knees and cried. Carlyon wouldn't do anything. Carlyon was a gentleman like himself. And one could always appeal to Carlyon's sense of humour. "Hello, Carlyon, old man, it's ages since I've seen you. Have you heard this one, Carlyon, old chap? Carlyon, Carlyon, Carlyon." "And there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "How dare you teach my boy that stuff?" and then

he'd beaten her. His father had always talked of him as "my boy", as though his mother had not borne the pain. The damned, old hypocritical bully. "Please God, give me a bear." He hadn't wanted a live puppy, which needed looking after. Am I going to faint, he asked himself? What's this wood doing? Why a wood? Hansel and Gretel. There should be a cottage soon with a witch in it, and the cottage should be made of sugar. "I am so hungry," he said aloud. "I can't wait for Gretel." But inside himself he knew only too certainly that there was no Gretel. He and Gretel had kissed under the holly tree on the common one spring day. Across a faintly coloured sky a few plump clouds had tumbled recklessly. And then time and again he was walking up narrow stairs to small rooms and untidy beds, and walking down again feeling dissatisfied, because he had never found Gretel there. How curious everything was. And now this wood. . . . He saw a light glimmering in front at what seemed an infinite distance, and he began to run, remembering that Carlyon might be somewhere behind him in the dark. He had to get on, get on, get on. His feet stumbled, stumbled, and every stumble sent a shoot of pain up his arm to the shoulder, starting from his torn wrist, but not a stumble brought the light nearer. It shone mockingly ahead, very small and sharp and immeasurably knowing. It was as though the world had heaved upward, like a ship in a rough sea, and brought a star to its own lamp's level. But as distant and as inaccessible as the star was the light.

He was almost on top of the light before he realised that its smallness was due to size and not to

distance. The grey stones of a cottage suddenly hunched themselves up between the trees. To the man raising his head to see the ramshackle bulk, it was as though the uneven, knobbled shoulders of the place had shrugged themselves from the earth. The cottage had but one floor above the ground, and the window with which it faced the wood was of thick glass, slightly tinted, like the glass of liquor bottles. The stones of the place gave the impression of having been too hastily and formlessly piled upon one another, so that now with old age they had slipped, some this way, some that way, a little out of the perpendicular. An excrescence built clumsily upon one end might have been anything from some primitive sanitary arrangement to a pigsty or even a small stable.

He stood and watched it and swayed a little upon his feet. Soon he would go up and knock, but for the moment in spite of weariness and the pain from his wounded wrist, he was engaged in the favourite process of dramatising his actions. "Out of the night," he said to himself, and liking the phrase repeated it, "out of the night." "A hunted man," he added, "pursued by murderers," but altered that to "by worse than death." He imagined himself knocking on that door. He saw it opening, and there would appear an old white-faced woman with the face of a saint. She would take him in, and shelter him. She would be like a mother to him and bind his wrist and give him food and drink, and when he had slept he would tell her everything—"I am a hunted man," he would say, "pursued by worse than death."

He became afraid again of his own reiteration of

the phrase "worse than death". There was little satisfaction in an image which stood upon a fact. He looked behind him once into the dark from which he had come, half expecting to see Carlyon's face luminous there, like a lighted turnip. Then he stepped nearer to the cottage.

When he felt the rough stones warm under his palm, he was comforted. At least it was something solid to have at one's back. He turned and faced the wood, stared and stared, trying to pick out details and to see where each trunk stood. But either his eyes were tired, or else the darkness was too deep. The wood remained a black, forbidding immensity. He felt his way cautiously along the wall to the window and then, standing on tiptoe, tried to peer within. He could perceive only shadows, and the flame of a candle which stood on the ledge inside. He thought that one shadow in the room moved, but it might merely have been the effect of the flickering light. His mind cleared a little and gave room for cunning, and with cunning there crawled in uneasiness. He felt his way very cautiously along the wall towards the door, listening for any sound from the cottage on one side of him and from the wood on the other. It would be like his luck, he thought, his heart giving a sick jolt, if he had stumbled on a smuggler's hole. It was just such a night, he knew, as he would have chosen himself to run a cargo, dark and moonless. Perhaps he had better move on and avoid the place, and even as the thought crossed his mind his fingers touched the wood of the door. His legs were weak as butter, his wrist was sending stab after stab of pain up his arm, and the edge of an

approaching mist touched his consciousness. He could go no farther. Better face what lay within the cottage than lie defenceless outside with Carlyon perhaps approaching through the wood. The vision of the white-haired old mother had been effaced very completely. He fumbled at the door, but he was unprepared for it to swing readily open, and he fell on his knees across the threshold in a silly sprawl.

He looked up. Clogged and dulled by that ever-approaching mist a voice had spoken to him. "Stay where you are," it had said with a kind of quiet and unsurprised command. Now he saw at the other side of the room, wavering a little like a slim upstrained candle-flame, a woman. She was young, he recognised with an automatic leer, and white in the face but not frightened. What kept him still upon his knees, besides the complete physical weariness that made him unwilling to rise, was the gun which was aimed steadily at his chest. He could see the hammer raised.

"I say," he said. "I say." He was displeased at the dead sound of his own voice. He felt that it should be full of the mingled pathos of weariness and appeal. "You needn't be afraid," he tried again. "I'm done in."

"You can stand up," she said, "and let me look at you." He rose shakily to his feet, with a feeling of immense grievance. This wasn't the way for a woman to behave. She should be frightened, but she very damnably wasn't. It was he who felt the fear, with his eye warily watching the gun.

"Now what do you want?" she asked. To his surprise there was no anger in her voice, but a quite

genuine curiosity. It annoyed him to know that she was patently the mistress of the situation. It made him even in his weakness want to bully her, to teach her. If only he could get that gun. . . .

"I want a hiding place," he said. "I'm being followed."

"Runners?" she asked. "Gaugers? You can't stop here. You'd better go the way you came."

"But I can't," he said, "they'd get me. Look here, I'm on the side of the law. It's not the officers who are after me." His eyes fixed on the gun, he made a step forward, spreading out his hands in appeal, in a gesture which he had often seen made on the stage.

"Keep back," she said, "you can't stay here. Turn round and go out."

"For the love of God," he said. He had picked that expression also from the stage, but the girl could not be expected to know it. It sounded genuine, for his voice was full of real tears. He was tired out and wanted to sleep.

"If you are being followed," she said, as though speaking to a very stupid child, "you are wasting time here."

"When I get you," he said with sudden fury, "I'll teach you charity. Call yourself a Christian"—his eyes filled with warm sentimental tears at a sudden vision of little grey churches, corn fields, stiles, honeyed distant bells in the dusk, robins in snow. "I'll teach you," he said again. The white serenity of her face infuriated him, "I'll tell you what I'll do to you." With childish petulance he flung his mud at something beautiful and very distant, hated himself and enjoyed his hatred. He described what he

would do to her in a brief, physiological sentence, and rejoiced at the flush which it fetched to her face. His outburst brought the mist down closer upon him. "You can join your fellows on the streets then," he cried at her, determined to hurt before fainting should make him a powerless, shameful weakling at her mercy. For a moment he thought that she was going to shoot. He was too exhausted for fear now and felt only a vague satisfaction that he had made himself sufficiently hateful to drive her to action. Then the danger passed. "I told you to go," was all she said, "I don't know what you want here."

He swayed a little on his feet. He could hardly see her now. She was a lighter wisp in a world of grey. "Look, he's at the window," he cried with sudden vehemence, and as the wisp moved he lunged forward.

He felt the gun within his hand and forced it upwards, struggling at the same time for the trigger. The girl had been taken by surprise and for the moment gave way.

With the muzzle pointing somewhere at the ceiling, he pulled the trigger. The hammer fell, but there was no explosion. The girl had fooled him with an unloaded weapon. "Now, I'll teach you," he said. He tried to wrench the gun away, the better to get at her, but his right wrist seemed to double up and collapse with the effort. He felt a hand press against his face, and his whole body grew weak, and he stumbled backwards. He hit against a table which he had not seen was in the room, so focused had his eyes been on the danger in front of him. He put out a hand to save himself, for his legs seemed

made in numerous joints, which were now all folding in upon each other. Something fell to the floor with a brief dart of gold, like a disdainful guinea, and his fingers were scorched for a moment by flame.

The pain cleared his brain with the suddenness of an unseen hand wrenching a curtain aside. He looked behind him and found himself staring into a heavy bearded face, over which three other candles sent a straying luminance.

"But . . ." he cried, and never knew what he meant to add. He backed away in disgust from the body where it lay in its unlidded and unvarnished coffin. He had never met death before so startlingly face to face. His mother he had never seen in death, for his father had huddled her quickly away in earth with a cross and a bunch of flowers, and his father had been killed in a running fight at sea and dropped unobtrusively over the side, while he was learning to decline *oikia* at his school in Devon. He was frightened and disgusted and sick and somehow ashamed. It was, he felt remotely, indecorous to broil thus over a coffin, even though the coffin were of unvarnished deal. His eyes searched a deepening darkness, flickering with gold points where the candles shone, until they found a face which seemed now white rather with weariness than serenity. "I'm sorry," he said, and then the lights were all extinguished.



## CHAPTER II

OVER a toppling pile of green vegetables two old women were twittering. They pecked at their words like sparrows for crumbs. "There was a fight, and one of the officers was killed." "They'll hang for that. But three of them escaped." The vegetables began to grow and grow in size, cauliflowers, cabbages, carrots, potatoes. "Three of them escaped, three of them escaped," one of the cauliflowers repeated. Then the whole pile fell to the ground, and Carlyon was walking towards him. "Have you heard this one?" he said, "Three of them escaped, three of them escaped." He came nearer and nearer and his body grew in size, until it seemed as though it must burst like a swollen bladder. "Have you heard this one, Andrews?" he said. Andrews became aware that somewhere behind a gun was being levelled, and he turned, but there were only two men, whose faces he could not see, laughing together. "Old Andrews, we won't see his like again. Do you remember the time . . ." "Oh, shut up, shut up," he called, "he was only a brute, I tell you. My father was a brute." "Ring a ring a roses," his father and Carlyon were dancing round him, holding hands. The ring got smaller and smaller and he could feel their breath, Carlyon's cool and scentless, his father's stale, tobacco-laden. He was gripped round the waist, and someone called out "Three of them escaped." The arms began to drag him away, "I didn't do it," he cried. "I didn't do it." Tears ran down his cheeks. He struggled and struggled against the pulling arms.