

He described the design he had made for his picture: two fat old women bargaining, and a strong man carrying a basket of fruit on his head.

"A good beginning," said Logan. "I . . . I could never get going. I was always overseen in my work."

"Overseen!" said Mendel, puzzled by the word.

"Yes. I was always outside the picture, working at it. . . . Too . . . too much brains, too little force."

"I see," said Mendel, for whom a cold finger had been put on one of his own outstanding offences against art. For a moment it brought him to an ashamed silence, but Logan's words slipped so easily into his understanding and took up their habitation there, that he was powerless to resent or to attempt to dislodge them.

"Overseen," Logan repeated, with an obvious pleasure in plucking out the weeds from their friendship, in the fair promise of which he found peace and joy. "That was the trouble. It couldn't go on. . . . City life, I think. Too much for us. Things too much our own way. . . . Egoism. . . ."

"I know that I am feeling my way towards something and that it is no good forcing it," said Mendel.

An acute attack of pain seized Logan, and he closed his eyes and was silent for a long time, with his brows knit in a kind of impatient boredom at having to submit to such a thing as pain.

"They've been very good to me," he said. "Given me everything as if I were really ill."

He sank back into pain again.

Mendel looked across at the policeman with a feeling of irritation that he should be there, a typical figure of the absurd chaotic life which had fallen away, a symbol of the factitious pretence of order which could only deceive a child.