Anthony Powell’s The Kindly Ones, published in 1962, forms the sixth part or volume of the author’s major novel sequence, A Dance to the Music of Time. The appearance of The Kindly Ones signifies the completion of the second trilogy in the sequence, following on from At Lady Molly’s and Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant. It also brings us to the mid-point in A Dance to the Music of Time as a whole. Though most critics have agreed that the overall quality of the successive volumes is very evenly balanced, this sixth volume has received particular praise, especially in relation to its opening part - the first of four chapters - in which the narrator, Nicholas Jenkins, describes for the first time a period in his childhood which coincided with events leading to the outbreak of the First World War.

ONE

The original blurb accompanying the publication of The Kindly Ones informed the reader that each novel, while remaining part of the series, could be read as complete in itself. It is possible to do this, but the reader would be much wiser to simply start at the beginning and work his way through. The pattern or ‘dance’ becomes much easier to understand if this method is adopted. The allusions within the books and the repeated appearances of certain characters have indeed become landmarks and familiar re-unions for many Powell enthusiasts. By 1976, shortly after completion of the final volume, Time magazine’s reviewer acknowledged as much when he stated:

“He [Powell] is a writer who should be read in bulk ... Dipped into at random, any one of these books can seem bland at best”.
(17th May 1976)

And Richard Jones, writing in the same year, echoes this:

“Because the story-line in the sequence flows on from book to book and the characters and the narrator make so many references to past events, there is little profit in starting to read the novels out of order once the third volume is passed.”

The Kindly Ones has been described by Brownjohn (1976) as “... arguably the finest in the series up to that point ...” It is particularly interesting in that the opening chapter takes us back to 1914 and the time leading up to the outbreak of war. This first chapter, comprising seventy-three pages, is a major departure from the otherwise chronological sequence of events related to us by Nicholas Jenkins. (The opening of the previous novel, Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant contained reminiscences of a few years earlier but the first chapter of The Kindly Ones is the first complete section to concern itself entirely with a much earlier period, thus temporarily checking the flow of the Dance.) This flashback, whilst very relevant to the sequence as a whole is also much more self-contained than other parts of A Dance to the Music of Time, and if The Kindly Ones could not profitably be read in isolation, this first chapter might well stand as a short story in its own right. Bergonzi (1984) is a particular admirer of the first chapter which he refers to as:
“This superb piece of writing, one of the great achievements of the whole sequence ...”

The title The Kindly Ones comes from the Greek Furies, the harbingers of war who the Greeks thought they could appease by calling them ‘kindly’, ‘gracious’ and ‘well-disposed’. The choice of title is appropriate in that this novel covers the periods directly preceding both the First and the Second World Wars. The character, Dr. Trelawney appears just before both outbreaks of war whilst Uncle Giles figures - in very different circumstances - in both periods in the novel, and the ‘Furies’ in general can be seen to drive many of the other characters in the novel.

Wilcox (1976) writes:

“What Powell sees and has Jenkins see is that all men are ‘driven’ but ‘at different speeds’ (and, one might add, on different routes), that their fates are determined but willed, and that each is ordinary but extraordinary. One may generalize about human beings, but only to say that each is unique, with a separate fate that is ‘the consequence of being the kind of person one chances to be.’”

This novel, then, completes the second trilogy by returning to the present reality of 1939 after its lengthy opening diversion in which Jenkins relates his childhood memories leading up to the war in 1914. The outbreak of the Second World War brings to a close both a phase of history and an important part of the narrator’s life. We are thus prepared for the next ‘wartime trilogy’ part of the sequence.

TWO

Tucker (1983) says that in some ways The Kindly Ones, although set outside the time-span of the Second World War, is the first of the war books. He also notes the effectiveness with which Powell shifts chronology in the first chapter and the juxtaposition of the incidents leading up to both wars:

“... Powell boldly shifts chronology back in the opening chapter to Jenkins’s childhood at Stonehurst, near Aldershot, where his father was stationed while waiting to fight in World War I. Then, in a later section, bristling with coincidences, we move forward to the weeks just before the outbreak of World War II ... Powell is here stretching likelihood so as to suggest the patterned and cyclic nature of time: war and rumours of war are shown as part of the cycle. The Greek Furies, whose savagery men tried to placate with the inappropriate title, The Kindly Ones, were lurking after the Sarajevo assassination in 1914 - with which the early part of the book ends - and which led to World War I; and they lurk again after the Russo-German pact of August 1939 - with which chapter 3 closes -which made World War II a certainty. It is a somberly effective juxtaposition by Powell.”

Of the characters encountered in the first chapter, only Uncle Giles, and to a lesser extent, General Conyers (apart from Jenkins himself) have played any significant part in the previous volumes. However, one other character, introduced in this chapter for the first time in the series, is the ‘magician’ Dr. Trelawney, who proceeds to take on a position of some importance in this book and in the subsequent unfolding of events in the series.

Spurling (1977) has remarked that Dr. Trelawney’s importance is ‘out of all proportion to his actual appearances’ in this book. He is, in fact, encountered directly only twice in The Kindly Ones when he takes on significance as a ‘harbinger of war’, appearing first in the opening chapter on the day of the Sarajevo assassination and then much later in the same novel to give prophecies of impending doom in the Second World War. On both occasions he is seen in a less than favourable light.

In the opening chapter he appears to the young Jenkins as a rather unconvincing and faintly sinister leader of a local cult devoted to callisthenics, yoga and the Simple Life. His bearded and robed, middle-aged figure could be regularly seen on runs past the Stonehurst gates. By the time of his second appearance some quarter of a century later, he is presented in rather comical fashion as a semi-
invalid who locks himself in the bathroom at the Bellevue Hotel.

Trelawney’s importance is, however, owing to the timing of his appearances and also, to the young Jenkins, as someone who haunts his boyhood dreams.

Uncle Giles is also someone who takes on a degree of importance in this opening chapter and, indeed, at various other times throughout *A Dance to the Music of Time*. He appears on that same fateful day in 1914 when he arrives at short notice at Stonehurst, much to the consternation and disapproval of his brother, Jenkins’ father, and his wife.

Uncle Giles is one of the most amusing characters in the whole of the sequence with his desultory life, shady background and his distrust of others who have doubtless (he thinks) got on better than him because of influence or ‘knowing the right people’. He is also used by the narrator as someone through whose eyes certain situations can be looked at in order to achieve a different perspective.

However, he is not just there to provide light relief and can also be seen as a rather sad character. Mizener (1963) says that:

“Like his sense of the absurdities of the human imagination - willful or not - Powell’s sense of its sadness asserts itself as implication, a shadow behind the character’s immediate responses and conscious intentions ... Even more remarkably, this sadness is evoked by the great comic egotists of *The Music of Time*, the J. G. Quiggins, the Uncle Gileses, the Widmerpools. It is a faint but persistent aftertaste of the comedy of their marvellous, unremitting self-absorption. In the end, despite their outrageous selfishness, one always sees the sadness of the defeat they have, from their own point of view so unjustly, suffered ... [Uncle Giles’s] is a wonderfully ludicrous life, and it would be easy to be so amused by Uncle Giles as to miss his underlying pathos, for his is not a despicable life ...”

Bayley (1987) has also noted that:

“The humanity of Uncle Giles is all the more poignant through the circumstances in which he is presented, and his final avatar in a south coast hotel is one of the most moving things in a book which is full of feats of this kind ...”

In the opening chapter of *The Kindly Ones*, the self-absorbed Uncle Giles brings the news of the assassination at Sarajevo, which he relays in typical fashion, almost muttering the facts:

“Some royalty in a motor-car have been involved in a nasty affair today. Heard the news in Aldershot. Fellow I went to see was told on the telephone. Amazing, isn’t it, hearing so soon. They’ve just assassinated an Austrian archduke down in Bosnia. Did it today. Only happened a few hours ago.” (page 72)

Because of the sudden change of chronology in chapter one and the extended flashback, this novel covers a wider period of time than any other in the series, and, as Karl (1962) points out, Powell has the chance to parade before us:

“... his full range of Dickensian characters: the ageless, enthusiastic General Conyers; the meretricious evangelist, Dr. Trelawney; the disenchanted vulgarian Peter Templer and his hysterical wife; the various servants who float through the Jenkins household; the friends who revolve around Nicholas, all of them much chastened by the world which they had once hoped to bend to their will.”

The method in which these people’s lives are shown to us is through the narrator’s reflections, at some date in the fairly distant future, and sometimes by way of the narrator ‘looking through the eyes’ of others, such as Uncle Giles. In revealing these lives to us, Jenkins makes considerable use of gossip and anecdote. This method, used in Powell’s early novels reaches its zenith in *A Dance to the Music of Time* which is, in a way, one large series of anecdotes. The anecdotal method has been commented upon by Bergonzzi (1984):

“The anecdotal method is used in a far more extensive but not essentially different way in *The Music of Time*, which is, among other
things, a vast expanding collection of anecdotes about the innumerable people who move in and out of the life of the narrator, Nicholas Jenkins, from childhood to middle age. Some are as brief and fragmentary as those in *Afternoon Men*, while others are very long and circumstantial, like Nicholas Jenkins’ childhood memory of the dramatic events one Sunday in the summer of 1914, involving his father’s cook, Albert, a female servant called Billson, and the visiting General Conyers, which takes up the first seventy pages of *The Kindly Ones* (*The Music of Time*, vol. VI).”

**THREE**

The memories of Nicholas Jenkins in chapter one may be of childhood but they are not childish. They are the reflections of a much older Jenkins (exactly how much older we do not know) that are related to us. The remembrances of the young Jenkins read as an authentic account of everyday life in such a household. The servants, as well as the Jenkins family seem to be captured extremely well through the often comic but realistic dialogue, in addition to what Jenkins tells us of them. This belies a much-bandied view that Powell is only interested in - or capable of writing about - upper class adults.

In first introducing Stonehurst and its inhabitants to us Jenkins states:

“Stonehurst, it was true, might be thought a trifle menacing in appearance, even ill-omened, but not in the least exotic. Its configuration suggested a long, low Noah’s Ark, come uncomfortably to rest on a heather-grown, coniferous spur of Mount Ararat; a Noah’s Ark, the opened lid of which would reveal myself, my parents, Edith, Albert, Billson, Mercy, several dogs and cats, and, at certain seasons, Bracey and Mrs. Gullick.” (page 9)

It is the household servants - all of them met for the first time in this chapter - whose lives are first revealed by Jenkins’ use of anecdote. The main ones are Albert the cook, Bracey the ‘soldier-servant,’ and Billson the highly-strung maid. Indeed, these three form something of a triangle as we learn that Bracey is romantically attached to Billson, who, in turn, is interested in Albert. Meanwhile, Albert is being pursued by ‘the girl from Bristol’ who eventually causes him to leave Stonehurst and marry.

Bracey the impeccably smart soldier-servant suffers from melancholia and this is amusingly described by Jenkins as taking the form, from time to time, of ‘funny days’. When Bracey had one of these ‘funny days’ he would lapse into sullen introspection and inaction which caused considerable alarm in the kitchen at Stonehurst. The following passage illustrates a typical ‘funny day’ and combines Jenkins’ precise narration with the laconic, almost ritualistic dialogue of Billson and Bracey:

“‘Albert has made an Irish stew’, Billson - as reported by Edith - might say. ‘It’s a nice stew. Won’t you have a taste, Private Bracey?’

At first Bracey would not answer. Billson might then repeat the question, together with an inquiry as to whether Bracey would accept a helping of the stew, or whatever other dish was available, from her own hand. This ritual might continue for several minutes, Billson giggling, though with increased nervousness, because of the personal element involved in Bracey’s sadness. This was the fact that he was known to be ‘sweet on’ Billson herself, who refused to accept him as a suitor. Flattered by Bracey’s attentions, she was probably alarmed at the same time by his melancholic fits, especially since her own temperament was a nervous one. In any case, she was always very self-conscious about ‘men’. ‘I’ll have it, if it is my right’, Bracey would at last answer in a voice not much above a whisper.

‘Shall I help you to a plate then, Private Bracey?’

‘If it’s my right, I’ll have a plate’.

‘Then I’ll give you some stew?’

‘If it’s my right’.

‘Shall I?’

‘Only if it’s my right’.

So long as the ‘funny day’ lasted, Bracey would commit himself to no more gracious acknowledgment than those words, spoken as
if reiterating some charm or magic formula. No wonder the kitchen was disturbed. Behaviour of this sort was very different from Albert’s sardonic, worldly dissatisfaction with life, his chronic complaint of persecution at the hands of women. ‘I haven’t had one of my funny days for a long time’, Bracey, pondering on his own condition, would sometimes remark. There was usually another ‘funny day’ pretty soon after self-examination had revealed that fact. Indeed, the observation in itself could be regarded as a very positive warning that a ‘funny day’ was on the way.” (pages 16-17)

This clipped, ritualistic dialogue is observed again shortly afterwards when Jenkins’ parents discuss Bracey:

“‘Good old Bracey’, my father would say. ‘He has his faults, of course, but he does know the meaning of elbow-grease. I’ve never met a man who could make top-boots shine like Bracey. They positively glitter’. ‘I’m sure he would do anything for you’, my mother would say. She held her own, never voiced, less enthusiastic, views on Bracey. ‘He worships you’, she would add. ‘Oh, nonsense.’ ‘He does’. ‘Of course not’. ‘I say he does’. ‘Don’t be silly’. This apparently contrary opinion of my father’s - the sequence of the sentences never varied - conveyed no strong sense of disagreement with the opinion my mother had expressed.” (page 18)

The method of contrasting the sometimes brief reported exchanges of the characters with the narrator’s thoughtful, even ponderous, prose (‘the observation itself could be regarded as ...’ and ‘conveyed no strong sense of disagreement with ...’) is typical of Powell’s style in this chapter, and, indeed, throughout the entire A Dance to the Music of Time series.

Jenkins is reflecting from some time in the future and is occasionally ponderous because he is - like the reader - sifting through the gossip, anecdotes and personal memories to find some overall truth of which he can never be absolutely certain. As a narrator, he is not omniscient. Tucker (1976) remarks of this method:

“The aim, of course, is naturalness, realism: many of our impressions in life are fragmentary, partial, faulty, either at the moment of receiving them or in retrospect. Powell catches this quality. Jenkins will continually express doubts about his own reading of a situation or assessment of a character ... Where Jenkins requires to pass on others’ impressions the possibility of a mistake is greater still; tentativeness in the narrator’s version becomes obligatory.”

Jenkins illustrates his fallibility, for example, when he says:

“I did not, of course, know all these things at the time, certainly not the relative strength of the emotions imprisoned under the surface of passing events at Stonehurst. Even now, much remains conjectural.” (page 21)

Soon after we are introduced to the inhabitants of Stonehurst, Jenkins recalls an outing to a football match together with Private Bracey. On their way to the match the young Jenkins asks Bracey:

“‘You’ll carry a bayonet always if the Germans come?’ ‘You bet’. ‘You’ll need it’. ‘Bayonet’s a man’s best friend in time of war’, said Bracey. ‘And a rifle?’ ‘And a rifle’, Bracey conceded. ‘Rifle and bayonet’s a man’s best friend when he goes to battle’.”

Jenkins, the narrator, then reflects on this:

“I thought a lot about that remark afterwards. Clearly its implications raised important moral issues, if not, indeed, conflicting judgments. I used to ponder, for example, what appeared to be its basic scepticism, so different from the supreme confidence in the claims of heroic
companionship put forward in all the adventure stories one read."
(page 27)

Later, during the match itself, Jenkins questions Bracey about the incident when one of Dr. Trelawney’s flock came to the Stonehurst door and requested a slice of cake, which was rather unwillingly given by Billson after consultation with Albert - and much to Bracey’s disapproval:

“‘Why did you think it wrong of Billson to give the little boy a slice of cake?’ I asked. We were still looking at the match, which, to tell the truth, did not entirely hold my attention, since I have never had any taste for watching games. ‘Not hers to give’, said Bracey, very sternly. I can see now, looking back, that the question was hopelessly, criminally, lacking in tact on my own part.”
(page 31)

And later Jenkins comments:

“Bracey was silent all the way home. I knew instinctively that a ‘funny day’ - almost certainly provoked by myself - could not be far off. This presentiment proved correct. Total spleen was delayed, though stormily, until the following Friday, when a sequence of ‘funny days’ of the most gruelling kind took immediate shape.”
(page 37)

Later in the chapter, Albert the cook gives his notice to Jenkins’ mother after revealing that ‘the girl from Bristol’ has finally caught up with him and he is reluctantly leaving to get married. (Much later in The Kindly Ones he re-appears as the host of the Bellevue Hotel, where Uncle Giles dies and Dr. Trelawney gives trouble.) The young Jenkins, waiting outside the room where Albert breaks his news, catches only fragments of this encounter and tries to make sense of it as the interview comes to an end:

“Albert swallowed several times. He looked quite haggard. The flesh of his face was pouch ed. I could see the situation was upsetting my mother too. Albert’s voice shook when he spoke at last. ‘Madam’, he said, ‘I’ve been goaded to this’. He shuffled off to the kitchen. There were tears in his eyes. I was aware that I had witnessed a painful scene, although, as so often happens in childhood, I could not analyse the circumstances.”
(page 47)

Although chapter one is, unlike much of the rest of the series, a largely self-contained section or story, Jenkins does on at least two occasions ‘flash forward’ to invoke the opinions of two characters otherwise outside the scope of Jenkins’ childhood memories. This adds another perspective to the narrator’s view. On page 41, after discussing some aspects of his father’s personality and his career in the army, he remarks:

“‘These senior officers are like a lot of ballerinas’, said my friend Pennistone, when, years later, we were in the army together.”

And earlier, when introducing Dr. Trelawney, Jenkins first gives his mother’s impressions of him, and then those of Mr. Deacon:

“When I myself ran across Mr. Deacon in later life and questioned him on the subject, he at once admitted that he had known Dr. Trelawney slightly at some early point in their careers.”
(page 34)

Mr. Deacon goes on - as told by Jenkins - to confirm Mrs. Jenkins’ sceptical opinion of Dr. Trelawney.

Similarly, when General Conyers is mentioned it is the turn of Uncle Giles to inform us, through Jenkins, that the General is ‘a bit too pleased with himself’.

General Conyers, first encountered in At Lady Molly’s, is invited to lunch at Stonehurst, together with his wife, on the day of Franz Ferdinand’s assassination, the 28th June 1914. An old friend - and distant relative - of the Jenkins family, he is famous for his capable manner and for his wide range of interests. Keeping abreast of modern thought, he has some knowledge of occult matters and takes a great interest in modern developments in psychoanalysis.
In many ways, the climax of the opening chapter, which pre-figures the disastrous international events of the same day, occurs when Billson, the maid, has a breakdown and makes a sensational naked appearance in the drawing room during the luncheon visit by General Conyers and his wife.

On the morning of this day Jenkins says that he woke up:

“... with a feeling of foreboding, a sensation to which I was much subject as a child. It was Sunday. Presentiments of ill were soon shown to have a good foundation.”

(page 45)

Billson had seen the now familiar ‘Stonehurst ghost’ once more and then Albert gives in his notice. Jenkins’ parents receive a telegram from Uncle Giles announcing a (most unwanted) visit from him on that day. Eventually the luncheon party begins and earnest conversation of current affairs is under way between Jenkins’ father and the General when the unexpected appearance of Billson is introduced quite suddenly but calmly into the narrative:

“‘If Liman von Sanders’ began my father. He never finished the sentence. The name of that militarily celebrated, endlessly discussed, internationally disputed, Britanically unacceptable, German General-Inspector of the Turkish Army was caught, held, crystallised in mid-air. Just as the words left my father’s lips, the door of the drawing-room opened quietly. Billson stood on the threshold for a split second. Then she entered the room. She was naked.”

(pages 59-60)

In what has been described as Powell’s ‘slow-motion’ technique, he then allows Jenkins to reflect, through his mother’s comments some time after the event, on how such a situation could have arisen. Billson’s waiting at table had been of a considerably lower standard than usual on that day and Jenkins ponders on the appearance of the ghost and Albert’s notice as possible catalysts in Billson’s subsequent behaviour. He concludes that no-one could have foreseen such a complete breakdown:

“I thought it was the end of the world’, my mother said.

I do not know to what extent she intended this phrase, so far as her own amazement was concerned, to be taken literally. My mother’s transcendental beliefs were direct, yet imaginative, practical, though possessing the simplicity of complete acceptance. She may have meant to imply, no more, no less, that for a second of time she herself truly believed the Last Trump (unheard in the drawing-room) had sounded in the kitchen, instantly metamorphosing Billson into one of those figures - risen from the tomb, given up by the sea, swept in from the ends of the earth - depicted in primitive paintings of the Day of Judgment. If, indeed, my mother thought that, she must also have supposed some awful, cataclysmic division from on High just to have take place, violently separating Sheep from Goats, depriving Billson of her raiment. No doubt my mother used only a figure of speech, but circumstances gave a certain aptness to the metaphor.

Joking apart’, my mother used to say, ‘it was a dreadful moment’.”

(pages 61-62)

In the above passage, typically, Powell allows the older Jenkins to reflect at some length on his mother’s view of the Billson breakdown and her use of metaphor, before continuing with the story of Billson’s entry to the drawing room. The reflective mood continues throughout the episode and the briefest dialogue is interspersed with the narrator’s general overview. Following Billson’s announcement that she has come to give notice, it is General Conyers who takes charge of the situation and who finally returns the scene to normality with swift, decisive action:

“In human life, the individual ultimately dominates every situation, however disordered, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse. On this occasion, as usual, all was not lost. There was a place for action, a display of will. General Conyers took in the situation at a glance. He saw this to be no time to dilate further upon Turkish subjection to German intrigue. He rose - so the story went - quite slowly from his chair, made two steps across the room, picked up
the Kashmir shawl from where it lay across the surface of the piano. Then, suddenly changing his tempo and turning quickly towards Billson, he wrapped the shawl protectively round her.

“‘Where is her room?’ he quietly asked. No one afterwards was ever very well able to describe how he transported her along the passage, partly leading, partly carrying, the shawl always decently draped round Billson like a robe. The point, I repeat, was that action had been taken, will-power brought into play. The spell cast by Billson’s nakedness was broken. Life was normal again.” (pages 63-64)

The aftermath of this scene is then described together with another of Uncle Giles’ remarks on the personality of General Conyers as reported by Jenkins.

Life, however, had not returned to normal again in the outside world, where events were leading inexorably towards the outbreak of the First World War. This long ‘short story’ draws to a close as the General and his wife prepare to leave Stonehurst and they encounter Dr. Trelawney. The General’s command of others extends even to a military style dismissal of the mystical Dr. Trelawney:

“‘Well, Trelawney’, he said, ‘I mustn’t keep you any longer. You will be wanting to lead your people on. Mustn’t take up all your day’. ‘On the contrary, General, the day - with its antithesis, night - is but an artificial apportionment of what we artlessly call Time’. ‘Nevertheless, Trelawney, Time has value, even if artificially apportioned’. ‘Then I shall expect to hear from you, General, when you wish to free yourself from bonds of Time and Space’. ‘You will, Trelawney, you will. Off you go now - at the double’.” (page 71)

Uncle Giles then appears with his news of the Sarajevo assassination, which effectively brings the action of Chapter One to a close.

Chapter One does not, however, finish at the point where Jenkins’ childhood is about to be interrupted by the outbreak of war. Reinforcing the view of the chapter as a ‘complete’ story in its own right, the three final pages move the time forward again to allow the mature Jenkins to round off this lengthy anecdote in reflections on the fates of the Stonehurst inhabitants. Again, Jenkins does not assume full knowledge of this.

We learn that Billson left Stonehurst shortly after her breakdown and was taken to Suffolk to be looked after by her family. More than thirty years later Jenkins is told by Rosie Manasch of a ‘daily’ named ‘Doreen’, formerly employed by her, who may or may not have been the same Billson. Jenkins’ father, Uncle Giles, General Conyers and Albert all survived the war - Albert, of course, marrying the ‘girl from Bristol’ and appearing again later in the same volume at the Bellevue Hotel. Bracey’s ‘funny days’ came to an end when he was killed in the war. Dr. Trelawney gave up his house. The fates of other minor characters are speculated upon. Jenkins ends:

“We left Stonehurst and its ‘ghosts’, inexplicably mysterious bungalow, presaging other inexplicable mysteries of life and death. I never heard whether subsequent occupants were troubled, as Billson and others had been troubled, by tall white spectres, uncomfortable invisible presences. Childhood was brought suddenly, even rather brutally, to a close. Albert’s shutters may have kept out the suffragettes: they did not effectively exclude the Furies.” (page 77)

At the very beginning of the chapter we see Albert fitting an iron bar behind the wooden shutters he has just closed. The chapter’s final sentence reminds us of this first scene and of Albert’s aversion to suffragettes. It also provides a symmetry to this lengthy story within A Dance to the Music of Time, a novel sequence which also ends with symmetrical echoes of its own very earliest scenes.
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