

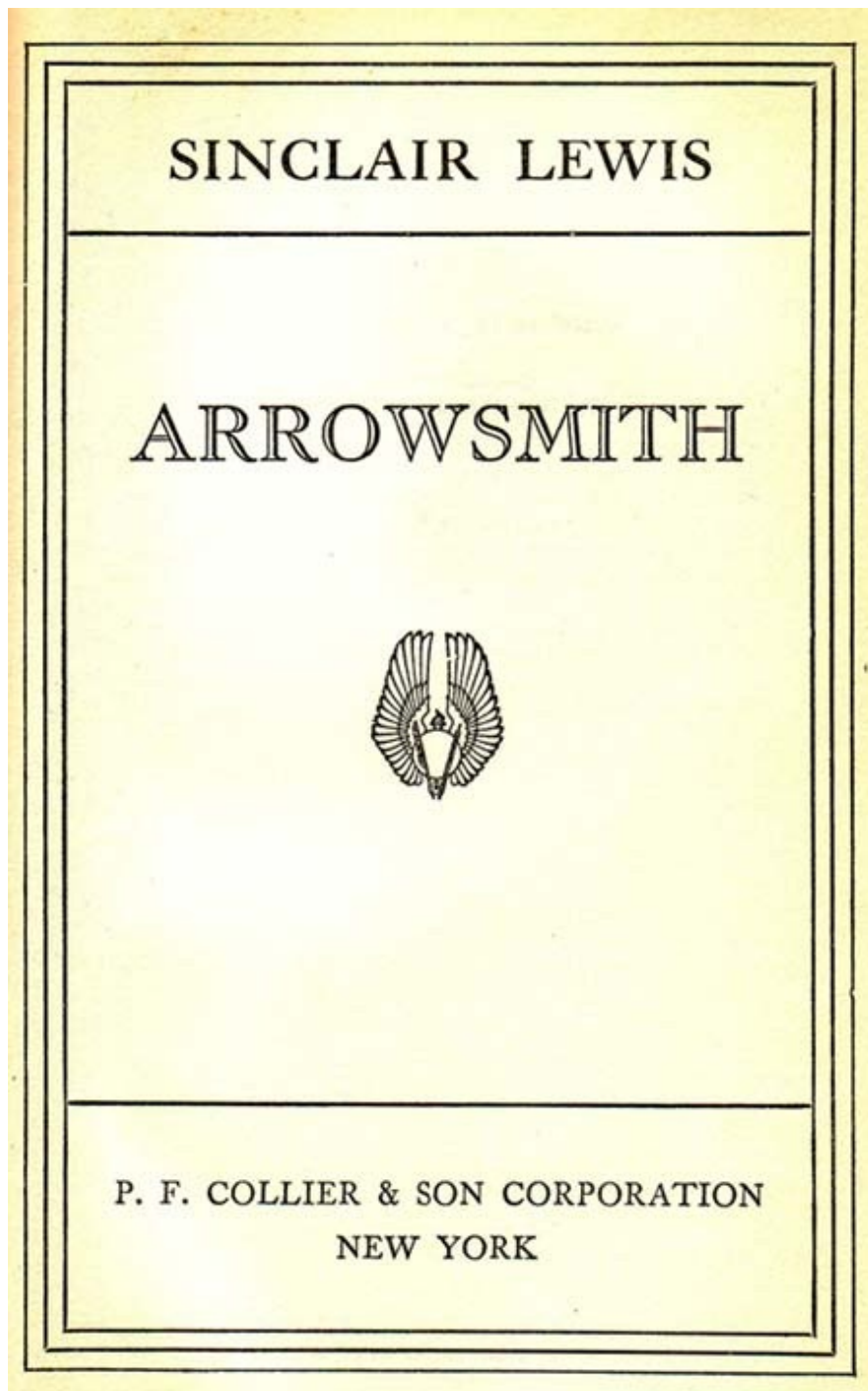
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[Lewis S \(1925\)](#). Arrowsmith. New York: Collier.

Title pages



To Dr. Paul H. DeKruif I am indebted not only for most of the bacteriological and medical material in this tale but equally for his help in the planning of the fable itself—for his realization of the characters as living people, for his philosophy as a scientist. With this acknowledgment I want to record our months of companionship while working on the book, in the United States, in the West Indies, in Panama, in London and Fontainebleau. I wish I could reproduce our talks along the way, and the laboratory afternoons, the restaurants at night, and the deck at dawn as we steamed into tropic ports.

SINCLAIR LEWIS

Key passages

In the joy of his laboratory work Martin thought rarely of his recent associates in Digamma Pi. He occasionally protested that the Reverend Ira Hinkley was a village policeman and Irving Watters a plumber, that Angus Duer would walk to success over his grandmother's head, and that for an idiot like Fatty Pfaff to practise on helpless human beings was criminal, but mostly he ignored them and ceased to be a pest. And when he had passed his first triumphs in bacteriology and discovered how remarkably much he did not know, he was curiously humble.

If he was less annoying in regard to his classmates, he was more so in his classrooms. He had learned from Gottlieb the trick of using the word "control" in reference to the person or animal or chemical left untreated during an experiment, as a standard for comparison; and there is no trick more infuriating. When a physician boasted of his success with this drug or that electric cabinet, Gottlieb always snorted. "Where was your control? How many cases did you have under identical conditions, and how many of them did not get the treatment?" Now Martin began to mouth it—control, control, control, where's your control? where's your control?—till most of his fellows and a few of his instructors desired to lynch him.

He was particularly tedious in materia medica.

The professor of materia medica, Dr. Lloyd Davidson, would have been an illustrious shopkeeper. He was very popular. From him a future physician could learn that most important of all things: the proper drugs to give a patient, particularly when you cannot discover what is the matter with him. His classes listened with zeal, and memorized the sacred hundred and fifty favorite prescriptions. (He was proud that this was fifty more than his predecessor had required.)

But Martin was rebellious. He inquired, and publicly, "Dr. Davidson, how do they know ichthyol is good for erysipelas? Isn't it just rotten fossil fish—isn't it like the mummy-dust and puppy-ear stuff they used to give in the olden days?"

"How do they know? Why, my critical young friend, because thousands of physicians have used it for years and found their patients getting better, and that's how they know!"

"But honest, Doctor, wouldn't the patients maybe have gotten better anyway? Wasn't it maybe a *post hoc, propter hoc*? Have they ever experimented on a whole slew of patients together, with controls?"

"Probably not—and until some genius like yourself, Arrow-smith, can herd together a few hundred people with exactly identical cases of erysipelas, it probably never will be tried! Meanwhile I trust that you other gentlemen, who perhaps lack Mr. Arrow-smith's profound scientific attainments and the power to use such handy technical terms as 'control,' will merely on

my feeble advice, continue to use ichthyol!"

But Martin insisted, "Please, Dr. Davidson, what's the use of getting all these prescriptions by heart, anyway? We'll forget most of 'em, and besides, we can always look 'em up in the book."

Davidson pressed his lips together, then:

"Arrowsmith, with a man of your age I hate to answer you as I would a three-year-old boy, but apparently I must. Therefore, you will learn the properties of drugs and the contents of prescriptions *because I tell you to!* If I did not hesitate to waste the time of the other members of this class, I would try to convince you that my statements may be accepted, not on my humble authority, but because they are the conclusions of wise men—men wiser or certainly a little older than you, my friend—through many ages. But as I have no desire to indulge in fancy flights of rhetoric and eloquence, I shall merely say that you will accept, and you will study, and you will memorize, because I tell you to!"

Martin considered dropping his medical course and specializing in bacteriology. He tried to confide in Clif, but Clif had become impatient of his fretting, and he turned again to the energetic and willowy Madeline Fox.

THE plague had only begun to invade St. Swithin's, but it was unquestionably coming, and Martin, with his power as official medical officer of the parish, was able to make plans. He divided the population into two equal parts. One of them, driven in by Twyford, was injected with plague phage, the other half was left without.

He began to succeed. He saw far-off India, with its annual four hundred thousand deaths from plague, saved by his efforts. He heard Max Gottlieb saying, "Martin, you haf done your experiment. I am very glat!"

The pest attacked the unphaged half of the parish much more heavily than those who had been treated. There did appear a case or two among those who had the phage, but among the others there were ten, then twenty, then thirty daily victims. These unfortunate cases he treated, giving the phage to alternate patients, in the somewhat barren almshouse of the parish, a whitewashed cabin the meaner against its vaulting background of banyans and breadfruit trees.