Tender is the Night, Book Two, F. Scott Fitzgerald

Book Two

I

In the spring of 1917, when Doctor Richard Diver first arrived in Zurich, he was twenty-six years old, a fine age for a man, indeed the very acme of bachelorhood. Even in war-time days, it was a fine age for Dick, who was already too valuable, too much of a capital investment to be shot off in a gun. Years later it seemed to him that even in this sanctuary he did not escape lightly, but about that he never fully made up his mind—in 1917 he laughed at the idea, saying apologetically that the war didn’t touch him at all. Instructions from his local board were that he was to complete his studies in Zurich and take a degree as he had planned.

Switzerland was an island, washed on one side by the waves of thunder around Gorizia and on another by the cataracts along the Somme and the Aisne. For once there seemed more intriguing strangers than sick ones in the cantons, but that had to be guessed at—the men who whispered in the little cafes of Berne and Geneva were as likely to be diamond salesmen or commercial travellers. However, no one had missed the long trains of blinded or one-legged men, or dying trunks, that crossed each other between the bright lakes of Constance and Neuchatel. In the beer-halls and shop-windows were bright posters presenting the Swiss defending their frontiers in 1914—with inspiring ferocity young men and old men glared down from the mountains at phantom French and Germans; the purpose was to assure the Swiss heart that it had shared the contagious glory of those days. As the massacre continued the posters withered away, and no country was more surprised than its sister republic when the United States bungled its way into the war.

Doctor Diver had seen around the edges of the war by that time: he was an Oxford Rhodes Scholar from Connecticut in 1914. He returned home for a final year at Johns Hopkins, and took his degree. In 1916 he managed to get to Vienna under the impression that, if he did not make haste, the great Freud would eventually succumb to an aeroplane bomb. Even then Vienna was old with death but Dick managed to get enough coal and oil to sit in his room in the Damenstift Strasse and write the pamphlets that he later destroyed, but that, rewritten, were the backbone of the book he published in Zurich in 1920.

Most of us have a favorite, a heroic period, in our lives and that was Dick Diver’s. For one thing he had no idea that he was charming, that the affection he gave and inspired was anything unusual among healthy people. In his last year at New Haven some one referred to him as “lucky Dick”—the name lingered in his head.

“Lucky Dick, you big stiff,” he would whisper to himself, walking around the last sticks of flame in his room. “You hit it, my boy. Nobody knew it was there before you came along.”

At the beginning of 1917, when it was becoming difficult to find coal, Dick burned for fuel almost a hundred textbooks that he had accumulated; but only, as he laid each one on the fire, with an assurance chuckling inside him that he was himself a digest of what was within the book, that he could brief it five years from now, if it deserved to be briefed. This went on at any odd hour, if necessary, with a floor rug over his shoulders, with the fine quiet of the scholar which is nearest of all things to heavenly peace—but which, as will presently be told, had to end.

For its temporary continuance he thanked his body that had done the flying rings at New Haven, and now swam in the winter Danube. With Elkins, second secretary at the Embassy, he shared an apartment, and there were two nice girl visitors—

which was that and not too much of it, nor too much of the Embassy either. His contact with Ed Elkins aroused in him a first faint doubt as to the quality of his mental processes; he could not feel that they were profoundly different from the thinking of Elkins—Elkins, who would name you all the quarterbacks in New Haven for thirty years.

“—And Lucky Dick can’t be one of these clever men; he must be less intact, even faintly destroyed. If life won’t do it for him it’s not a substitute to get a disease, or a broken heart, or an inferiority complex, though it’d be nice to build out some broken side till it was better than the original structure.”

He mocked at his reasoning, calling it specious and “American”—his criteria of uncerebral phrase-making was that it was American. He knew, though, that the price of his intactness was incompleteness.

“The best I can wish you, my child,” so said the Fairy Blackstick in Thackeray’s The Rose and the Ring, “is a little misfortune.”

In some moods he griped at his own reasoning: Could I help it that Pete Livingstone sat in the locker-room Tap Day when everybody looked all over hell for him? And I got an election when otherwise I wouldn’t have got Elihu, knowing so few men. He was good and right and I ought to have sat in the locker-room instead. Maybe I would, if I’d thought I had a chance at an election. But Mercer kept coming to my room all those weeks. I guess I knew I had a chance all right, all right. But it would have served me right if I’d swallowed my pin in the shower and set up a conflict.

After the lectures at the university he used to argue this point with a young Rumanian intellectual who reassured him: “There’s no evidence that Goethe ever had a ‘conflict’ in the modern sense, or a man like Jung, for instance. You’re not a romantic philosopher—you’re a scientist. Memory, force, character—especially good sense. That’s going to be your trouble—judgment about yourself—once I knew a man who worked two years on the brain of an armadillo, with the idea that he would sooner or later know more about the brain of an armadillo than any one. I kept arguing with him that he was not really pushing out the extension of the human range—it was too arbitrary. And sure enough, when he sent his work to the medical journal they refused it—they had just accepted a thesis by another man on the same subject.”

Dick got up to Zurich on less Achilles’ heels than would be required to equip a centipede, but with plenty—the illusions of eternal strength and health, and of the essential goodness of people; illusions of a nation, the lies of generations of frontier mothers who had to croon falsely, that there were no wolves outside the cabin door. After he took his degree, he received his orders to join a neurological unit forming in Bar-sur-Aube.

In France, to his disgust, the work was executive rather than practical. In compensation he found time to complete the short textbook and assemble the material for his next venture. He returned to Zurich in the spring of 1919 discharged.

The foregoing has the ring of a biography, without the satisfaction of knowing that the hero, like Grant, lolling in his general store in Galena, is ready to be called to an intricate destiny. Moreover it is confusing to come across a youthful photograph of some one known in a rounded maturity and gaze with a shock upon a fiery, wiry, eagle-eyed stranger. Best to be reassuring—Dick Diver’s moment now began.

II

It was a damp April day, with long diagonal clouds over the Albishorn and water inert in the low places. Zurich is not unlike an American city. Missing something ever since his arrival two days before, Dick perceived that it was the sense he had had in finite French lanes that there was nothing more. In Zurich there was a lot besides Zurich—the roofs upled the eyes to tinkling cow pastures, which in turn modified hilltops further up—so life was a perpendicular starting off to a postcard heaven. The Alpine lands, home of the toy and the funicular, the merry-go-round and the thin chime, were not a being here, as in France with French vines growing over one’s feet on the ground.

In Salzburg once Dick had felt the superimposed quality of a bought and borrowed century of music; once in the laboratories of the university in Zurich, delicately poking at the cervical of a brain, he had felt like a toy-maker rather than like the tornado who had hurried through the old red buildings of Hopkins, two years before, unstayed by the irony of the gigantic Christ in the entrance hall.

Yet he had decided to remain another two years in Zurich, for he did not underestimate the value of toy-making, in infinite precision, of infinite patience.

To-day he went out to see Franz Gregorovius at Dohmler’s clinic on the Zurichsee. Franz, resident pathologist at the clinic, a Vaudois by birth, a few years older than Dick, met him at the tram stop. He had a dark and magnificent aspect of Cagliostro about him, contrasted with holy eyes; he was the third of the Gregoroviuses—his grandfather had instructed Krapaelin when psychiatry was just emerging from the darkness of all time. In personality he was proud, fiery, and sheeplike—he fancied himself as a hypnotist. If the original genius of the family had grown a little tired, Franz would without doubt become a fine clinician.

On the way to the clinic he said: “Tell me of your experiences in the war. Are you changed like the rest? You have the same stupid and unaging American face, except I know you’re not stupid, Dick.”

“I didn’t see any of the war—you must have gathered that from my letters, Franz.”

“That doesn’t matter—we have some shell-shocks who merely heard an air raid from a distance. We have a few who merely read newspapers.”

“It sounds like nonsense to me.”

“Maybe it is, Dick. But, we’re a rich person’s clinic—we don’t use the word nonsense. Frankly, did you come down to see me or to see that girl?”

They looked sideways at each other; Franz smiled enigmatically.

“Naturally I saw all the first letters,” he said in his official basso. “When the change began, delicacy prevented me from opening any more. Really it had become your case.”

“Then she’s well?” Dick demanded.

“Perfectly well, I have charge of her, in fact I have charge of the majority of the English and American patients. They call me Doctor Gregory.”

“Let me explain about that girl,” Dick said. “I only saw her one time, that’s a fact. When I came out to say good-by to you just before I went over to France. It was the first time I put on my uniform and I felt very bogus in it—went around saluting private soldiers and all that.”

“Why didn’t you wear it to-day?”

“Hey! I’ve been discharged three weeks. Here’s the way I happened to see that girl. When I left you I walked down toward that building of yours on the lake to get my bicycle.”

“—toward the ‘Cedars’?”

“—a wonderful night, you know—moon over that mountain—”

“The Krenzegg.”

“—I caught up with a nurse and a young girl. I didn’t think the girl was a patient; I asked the nurse about tram times and we walked along. The girl was about the prettiest thing I ever saw.”

“She still is.”

“She’d never seen an American uniform and we talked, and I didn’t think anything about it.’ He broke off, recognizing a familiar perspective, and then resumed: ‘—except, Franz, I’m not as hard-boiled as you are yet; when I see a beautiful shell like that I can’t help feeling a regret about what’s inside it. That was absolutely all—till the letters began to come.”

“It was the best thing that could have happened to her,” said Franz dramatically, “a transference of the most fortuitous kind. That’s why I came down to meet you on a very busy day. I want you to come into my office and talk a long time before you see her. In fact, I sent her into Zurich to do errands.” His voice was tense with enthusiasm. “In fact, I sent her without a nurse, with a less stable patient. I’m intensely proud of this case, which I handled, with your accidental assistance.”

The car had followed the shore of the Zurichsee into a fertile region of pasture farms and low hills, steepled with chalets. The sun swam out into a blue sea of sky and suddenly it was a Swiss valley at its best—pleasant sounds and murmurs and a good fresh smell of health and cheer.

Professor Dohmler’s plant consisted of three old buildings and a pair of new ones, between a slight eminence and the shore of the lake. At its founding, ten years before, it had been the first modern clinic for mental illness; at a casual glance no layman would recognize it as a refuge for the broken, the incomplete, the menacing, of this world, though two buildings were surrounded with vine-softened walls of a deceptive height. Some men raked straw in the sunshine; here and there, as they rode into the grounds, the car passed the white flag of a nurse waving beside a patient on a path.

After conducting Dick to his office, Franz excused himself for half an hour. Left alone Dick wandered about the room and tried to reconstruct Franz. from the litter of his desk, from his books and the books of and by his father and grandfather; from the Swiss piety of a huge claret-colored photo of the former on the wall. There was smoke in the room; pushing open a French window, Dick let in a cone of sunshine. Suddenly his thoughts swung to the patient, the girl.

He had received about fifty letters from her written over a period of eight months. The first one was apologetic, explaining that she had heard from America how girls wrote to soldiers whom they did not know. She had obtained the name and address from Doctor Gregory and she hoped he would not mind if she sometimes sent word to wish him well, etc., etc.

So far it was easy to recognize the tone—from “Daddy-Long-Legs” and “Molly-Make-Believe,” sprightly and sentimental epistolary collections enjoying a vogue in the States. But there the resemblance ended.

The letters were divided into two classes, of which the first class, up to about the time of the armistice, was of marked pathological turn, and of which the second class, running from thence up to the present, was entirely normal, and displayed a richly maturing nature. For these latter letters Dick had come to wait eagerly in the last dull months at Bar-sur-Aube—yet even from the first letters he had pieced together more than Franz would have guessed of the story.

MON CAPITAINE:
I thought when I saw you in your uniform you were so handsome. Then I thought Je m'en fiche French too and German. You thought I was pretty too but I've had that before and a long time I've stood it. If you come here again with that attitude base and criminal and not even faintly what I had been taught to associate with the role of gentleman then heaven help you. However, you seem quieter than the others,

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all soft like a big cat. I have only gotten to like boys who are rather sissies. Are you a sissy? There were some somewhere.

Excuse all this, it is the third letter I have written you and will send immediately or will never send. I've thought a lot about moonlight too, and there are many witnesses I could find if I could only be out of here.

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They said you were a doctor, but so long as you are a cat it is different. My head aches so, so excuse this walking there like an ordinary with a white cat will explain, I think. I can speak three languages, four with English, and am sure I could be useful interpreting if you arrange such thing in France I'm sure I could control everything with the belts all bound around everybody like it was Wednesday. It is now Saturday and

(4)
you are far away, perhaps killed.

Come back to me some day, for I will be here always on this green hill. Unless they will let me write my father, whom I loved dearly.

Excuse this. I am not myself today. I will write when I feel better.
Cherio
NICOLE WARREN.
Excuse all this.

CAPTAIN DIVER:
I know introspection is not good for a highly nervous state like mine, but I would like you to know where I stand. Last year or whenever it was in Chicago when I got so I couldn't speak to servants or walk in the street I kept waiting for some one to tell me. It was the duty of some one who understood. The blind must be led. Only no one would tell me everything—they would just tell me half and I was already too muddled to put two and two together. One man was nice—he was a French officer and he understood. He gave me a flower and said it was "plus petite et

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moins entendue." We were friends. Then he took it away. I grew sicker and there was no one to explain to me. They had a song about Joan of Arc that they used to sing at me but that was just mean—it would just make me cry, for there was nothing the matter with my head then. They kept making reference to sports, too, but I didn't care by that time. So there was that day I went walking on Michigan Boulevard on and on for miles and finally they followed me in an automobile, but I wouldn't get

(3)
in. Finally they pulled me in and there were nurses. After that time I began to realize it all, because I could feel what was happening in others. So you see how I stand. And what good can it be for me to stay here with the doctors harping constantly in the things I was here to get over. So today I have written my father to come and take me away. I am glad

(4)
you are so interested in examining people and sending them back. It must be so much fun.

And again, from another letter:

You might pass up your next examination and write me a letter. They just sent me some phonograph records in case I should forget my lesson and I broke them all so the nurse won't speak to me. They were in English, so that the nurses would not understand. One doctor in Chicago said I was bluffing, but what he really meant was that I was a twin six and he had never seen one before. But I was very busy being mad then, so I didn't care what he said, when I am very busy being mad I don't usually care what they say, not if I were a million girls.

You told me that night you'd teach me to play. Well, I think love is all

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there is or should be. Anyhow I am glad your interest in examinations keeps you busy.
Tout a vous,
NICOLE WARREN.

There were other letters among whose helpless cæsuras lurked darker rhythms.

DEAR CAPTAIN DIVER:
I write to you because there is no one else to whom I can turn and it seems to me if this farcicle situation is apparent to one as sick as me it should be apparent to you. The mental trouble is all over and besides that I am completely broken and humiliated, if that was what they wanted. My family have shamefully neglected me, there's no use asking them for help or pity. I have had enough and it is simply ruining my health and wasting my time pretending that what is the matter with my

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head is curable.

Here I am in what appears to be a semi-insane-asylum, all because nobody saw fit to tell me the truth about anything. If I had only known what was going on like I know now I could have stood it I guess for I am pretty strong, but those who should have, did not see fit to enlighten me.

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And now, when I know and have paid such a price for knowing, they sit there with their dogs lives and say I should believe what I did believe. Especially one does but I know now.

I am lonesome all the time far away from friends and family across the Atlantic I roam all over the place in a half daze. If you could get me a position as interpreter (I know French and German like a native, fair

(4)
Italian and a little Spanish) or in the Red Cross Ambulance or as a trained nurse, though I would have to train you would prove a great blessing.

And again:

Since you will not accept my explanation of what is the matter you could at least explain to me what you think, because you have a kind cat's face, and not that funny look that seems to be so fashionable here. Dr. Gregory gave me a snapshot of you, not as handsome as you are in your uniform, but younger looking.

MON CAPITAINE:
It was fine to have your postcard. I am so glad you take such interest in disqualifying nurses—oh, I understood your note very well indeed. Only I thought from the moment I met you that you were different.

DEAR CAPITAINE:
I think one thing today and another tomorrow. That is really all that's the matter with me, except a crazy defiance and a lack of proportion. I would gladly welcome any alienist you might suggest. Here they lie in their bath tubs and sing Play in Your Own Backyard as if I had my

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backyard to play in or any hope which I can find by looking either backward or forward. They tried it again in the candy store again and I almost hit the man with the weight, but they held me.

I am not going to write you any more. I am too unstable.

And then a month with no letters. And then suddenly the change.

— I am slowly coming back to life…

— Today the flowers and the clouds…

— The war is over and I scarcely knew there was a war…

— How kind you have been! You must be very wise behind your face like a white cat, except you don't look like that in the picture Dr. Gregory gave me…

— Today I went to Zurich, how strange a feeling to see a city again.

— Today we went to Berne, it was so nice with the clocks.

— Today we climbed high enough to find asphodel and edelweiss…

After that the letters were fewer, but he answered them all. There was one:

I wish someone were in love with me like boys were ages ago before I was sick. I suppose it will be years, though, before I could think of anything like that.

But when Dick's answer was delayed for any reason, there was a fluttering burst of worry—like a worry of a lover: "Perhaps I have bored you," and: "Afraid I have presumed," and: "I keep thinking at night you have been sick."

In actuality Dick was sick with the flu. When he recovered, all except the formal part of his correspondence was sacrificed to the consequent fatigue, and shortly afterward the memory of her became overlaid by the vivid presence of a Wisconsin telephone girl at headquarters in Bar-sur-Aube. She was red-lipped like a poster, and known obscenely in the messes as "The Switchboard."

Franz came back into his office feeling self-important. Dick thought he would probably be a fine clinician, for the sonorous or staccato cadences by which he disciplined nurse or patient came not from his nervous system but from a tremendous and harmless vanity. His true emotions were more ordered and kept to himself.

"Now about the girl, Dick," he said. "Of course, I want to find out about you and tell you about myself, but first about the girl, because I have been waiting to tell you about it so long."

He searched for and found a sheaf of papers in a filing cabinet but after shuffling through them he found they were in his way and put them on his desk. Instead he told Dick the story.

III

ABOUT A YEAR AND a half before, Doctor Dohmler had some vague correspondence with an American gentleman living in Lausanne, a Mr Devereux Warren, of the Warren family of Chicago. A meeting was arranged and one day Mr Warren arrived at the clinic with his daughter Nicole, a girl of sixteen. She was obviously not well and the nurse who was with her took her to walk about the grounds while Mr Warren had his consultation.

Warren was a strikingly handsome man looking less than forty. He was a fine American type in every way, tall, broad, well-made—un homme tres chic, as Doctor Dohmler described him to Franz. His large grey eyes were sun-veined from rowing on Lake Geneva, and he had that special air about him of having known the best of this world. The conversation was in German, for it developed that he had been educated in Gottingen. He was nervous and obviously very moved by his errand.

“Doctor Dohmler, my daughter isn’t right in the head. I’ve had lots of specialists and nurses for her and she’s taken a couple of rest cures, but the thing has grown too big for me and I’ve been strongly recommended to come to you.”

“Very well,” said Doctor-Dohmler. “Suppose you start at the beginning and tell me everything.”

“There isn’t any beginning, at least there isn’t any insanity in the family that I know of, on either side. Nicole’s mother died when she was eleven and I’ve sort of been father and mother both to her, with the help of governesses—father and mother both to her.”

He was very moved as he said this. Doctor Dohmler saw that there were tears in the corners of his eyes and noticed for the first time that there was whiskey on his breath.

“As a child she was a darling thing—everybody was crazy about her, everybody that came in contact with her. She was smart as a whip and happy as the day is long. She liked to read or draw or dance or play the piano—anything. I used to hear my wife say she was the only one of our children who never cried at night. I’ve got an older girl, too, and there was a boy that died, but Nicole was—Nicole was—Nicole—”

He broke off and Doctor Dohmler helped him.

“She was a perfectly normal, bright, happy child.”

“Perfectly.”

Doctor Dohmler waited. Mr Warren shook his head, blew a long sigh, glanced quickly at Doctor Dohmler and then at the floor again.

“About eight months ago, or maybe it was six months ago or maybe ten—I try to figure but I can’t remember exactly where we were when she began to do funny things—crazy things. Her sister was the first one to say anything to me about it—because Nicole was always the same to me,” he added rather hastily, as if someone had accused him of being to blame, “—the same loving little girl. The first thing was about a valet.”

“Oh, yes,” said Doctor Dohmler, nodding his venerable head, as if, like Sherlock Holmes, he had expected a valet and only a valet to be introduced at this point.

“I had a valet—been with me for years—Swiss, by the way.” He looked up for Doctor Dohmler’s patriotic approval. “And she got some crazy idea about him. She thought he was making up to her—of course, at the time I believed her and I let him go, but I know now it was all nonsense.”

“What did she claim he had done?”

“That was the first thing—the doctors couldn’t pin her down. She just looked at them as if they ought to know what he’d done. But she certainly meant he’d made some kind of indecent advances to her—she didn’t leave us in any doubt of that.”

“I see.”

“Of course, I’ve read about women getting lonesome and thinking there’s a man under the bed and all that, but why should Nicole get such an idea ? She could have all the young men she wanted. We were in Lake Forest—that’s a summer place near Chicago where we have a place—and she was out all day playing golf or tennis with boys. And some of them pretty gone on her at that.”

All the time Warren was talking to the dried old package of Doctor Dohmler, one section of the latter’s mind kept thinking intermittently of Chicago. Once in his youth he could have gone to Chicago as fellow and docent at the university, and perhaps become rich there and owned his own clinic instead of being only a minor shareholder in a clinic. When he had thought of what he considered his own thin knowledge spread over that whole area, over all those wheat fields, those endless prairies, he had decided against it. But he had read about Chicago in those days, about the great feudal families of Armour, Palmer, Field, Crane, Warren, Swift, and McCormick and many others, and since that time not a few patients had come to him from that stratum of Chicago and New York.

“She got worse,” continued Warren. “She had a fit or something—the things she said got crazier and crazier. Her sister wrote some of them down—” He handed a much-folded piece of paper to the doctor. “Almost always about men going to attack her, men she knew or men on the street, anybody—”

He told of their alarm and distress, of the horrors families go through under such circumstances, of the ineffectual efforts they had made in America, finally of the faith in a change of scene that had made him run the submarine blockade and bring his daughter to Switzerland.

“—on a United States cruiser,” he specified with a touch of hauteur. “It was possible for me to arrange that, by a stroke of luck. And, may I add,” he smiled apologetically, “that as they say: money is no object.”

“Certainly not,” agreed Dohmler dryly.

He was wondering why and about what the man was lying to him. Or, if he was wrong about that, what was the falsity that pervaded the whole room, the handsome figure in tweeds sprawling in his chair with a sportsman’s ease? That was a—tragedy out there, in the February day, the young bird with wings crushed somehow, and inside here it was all too thin, thin and wrong.

“I would like—to talk to her—a few minutes now,” said Doctor Dohmler, going into English, as if it would bring him closer to Warren.

Afterwards when Warren had left his daughter and returned to Lausanne, and several days had passed, the doctor and Franz entered upon Nicole’s card:

Diagnostic: Schizophrenie. Phase aigue en decroissance. La peur des hommes est un symptome de la maladie, et n’est point constitutionelle… Le pronostic doit rester reserve. (Diagnosis: Divided Personality. Acute and down-hill phase of the illness. The fear of men is a symptom of the illness and is not at all constitutional. … The prognosis must be reserved.)

And then they waited with increasing interest as the days passed for Mr Warren’s promised second visit.

It was slow in coming. After a fortnight Doctor Dohmler wrote. Confronted with further silence he committed what was for those days une folie, and telephoned to the Grand Hotel at Vevey. He learned from Mr Warren’s valet that he was at the moment packing to sail for America. But reminded that the forty francs Swiss for the call would show up on the clinic books, the blood of the Tuileries Guard rose to Doctor Dohmler’s aid and Mr Warren was got to the phone.

“It is—absolutely necessary—that you come. Your daughter’s health—all depends. I can take no responsibility.”

“But look here, Doctor, that’s just what you’re for. I have a hurry call to go home!”

Doctor Dohmler had never yet spoken to anyone so far away, but he dispatched his ultimatum so firmly into the phone that the agonized American at the other end yielded. Half an hour after this second arrival on the Zurichsee, Warren had broken down, his fine shoulders shaking with awful sobs inside his easy-fitting coat, his eyes redder than the very sun on Lake Geneva, and they had the awful story.

“It just happened,” he said hoarsely. “I don’t know—I don’t know.”

“After her mother died when she was little she used to come into my bed every morning, sometimes she’d sleep in my bed. I was sorry for the little thing. Oh, after that, whenever we went places in an automobile or a train we used to hold hands. She used to sing to me. We used to say, ‘Now let’s not pay any attention to anybody else this afternoon—let’s just have each other—for this morning you’re mine.’” A broken sarcasm came into his voice. “People used to say what a wonderful father and daughter we were—they used to wipe their eyes. We were just like lovers—and then all at once we were lovers—and ten minutes after it happened I could have shot myself—except I guess I’m such a Goddamned degenerate I didn’t have the nerve to do it.”

“Then what?” said Doctor Dohmler, thinking again of Chicago and of a mild pale gentleman with a pince-nez who had looked him over in Zurich thirty years before. “Did this thing go on?”

“Oh, no! She almost—she seemed to freeze up right away. She’d just say, “Never mind, never mind, Daddy. It doesn’t matter. Never mind.””

“There were no consequences?”

“No.” He gave one short convulsive sob and blew his nose several times. “Except now there’re plenty of consequences.”

As the story concluded Dohmler sat back in the focal armchair of the middle class and said to himself sharply, “Peasant!”—it was one of the few absolute worldly judgements that he had permitted himself for twenty years. Then he said:

“I would like for you to go to a hotel in Zurich and spend the night and come see me in the morning.”

“And then what?”

Doctor Dohmler spread his hands wide enough to carry a young pig.

“Chicago,” he suggested.

IV

“THEN WE KNEW WHERE we stood,” said Franz. “Dohmler told Warren we would take the case if he would agree to keep away from his daughter indefinitely, with an absolute minimum of five years. After Warren’s first collapse, he seemed chiefly concerned as to whether the story would ever leak back to America.”

“We mapped out a routine for her and waited. The prognosis was bad—as you know, the percentage of cures, even so-called social cures, is very low at that age.”

“These first letters looked bad,” agreed Dick.

“Very bad—very typical. I hesitated about letting the first one get out of the clinic. Then I thought it will be good for Dick to know we’re carrying on here. It was generous of you to answer them.”

Dick sighed. “She was such a pretty thing—she enclosed a lot of snapshots of herself. And for a month there I didn’t have anything to do. All I said in my letters was” Be a good girl and mind the doctors.“”

“That was enough—it gave her somebody to think of outside. For a while she didn’t have anybody—only one sister that she doesn’t seem very close to. Besides, reading her letters helped us here—they were a measure other condition.”

“I’m glad.”

“You see now what happened? She felt complicity— that’s neither here nor there, except as we want to revalue her ultimate stability and strength of character. First came this shock. Then she went off to a boarding-school and heard the girls talking—so from sheer self-protection she developed the idea that she had had no complicity—and from there it was easy to slide into a phantom world where all men, the more you liked them and trusted them, the more evil—”

“Did she ever go into the—horror directly?”

“No, and as a matter of fact when she began to seem normal, about October, we were in a predicament. If she had been thirty years old we would have let her make her own adjustment, but she was so young we were afraid she might harden with it all twisted inside her. So Doctor Dohmler said to her frankly, ‘Your duty now is to yourself. This doesn’t by any account mean the end of anything for you—your life is just at its beginning,’ and so forth and so forth. She really has an excellent mind, so he gave her a little Freud to read, not too much, and she was very interested. In fact, we’ve made rather a pet other around here. But she is reticent,” he added; he hesitated: “We have wondered if in her recent letters to you which she mailed herself from Zurich, she has said anything that would be illuminating about her state of mind and her plans for the future.”

Dick considered.

“Yes and no—I’ll bring the letters out here if you want. She seems hopeful and normally hungry for life—even rather romantic. Sometimes she speaks of ‘the past’ as people speak who have been in prison. But you never know whether they refer to the crime or the imprisonment or the whole experience. After all I’m only a sort of stuffed figure in her life.”

“Of course, I understand your position exactly, and I express our gratitude once again. That was why I wanted to see you before you see her.”

Dick laughed.

“You think she’s going to make a flying leap at my person?”

“No, not that. But I want to ask you to go very gently. You are attractive to women, Dick.”

“Then God help me! Well, I’ll be gentle and repulsive—I’ll chew garlic whenever I’m going to see her and wear a stubble beard. I’ll drive her to cover.”

“Not garlic!” said Franz, taking him seriously. “You don’t want to compromise your career. But you’re partly joking.”

“—and I can limp a little. And there’s no real bathtub where I’m living, anyhow.”

“You’re entirely joking,” Franz relaxed—or rather assumed the posture of one relaxed. “Now tell me about yourself and your plans.”

“I’ve only got one, Franz, and that’s to be a good psychologist—maybe to be the greatest one that ever lived.”

Franz laughed pleasantly, but he saw that this time Dick wasn’t joking.

“That’s very good—and very American,” he said. “It’s more difficult for us.” He got up and went to the French window. “I stand here and I see Zurich—there is the steeple of the Gross-Munster. In its vault my grandfather is buried. Across the bridge from it lies my ancestor Lavater, who would not be buried in any church. Nearby is the statue of another ancestor, Heinrich Pestalozzi, and one of Doctor Alfred Escher. And over everything there is always Zwingli—I am continually confronted with a pantheon of heroes.”

“Yes, I see.” Dick got up. “I was only talking big. Everything’s just starting over. Most of the Americans in France are frantic to get home, but not me—I draw military pay all the rest of the year if I only attend lectures at the university. How’s that for a government on the grand scale that knows its future great men? Then I’m going home for a month and see my father. Then I’m coming back—I’ve been offered a job.”

“Where?”

“Your rivals—Gisler’s clinic at Interlaken.”

“Don’t touch it,” Franz advised him. “They’ve had a dozen young men there in a year. Gisler’s a manic-depressive himself, his wife and her lover run the clinic—of course, you understand that’s confidential.”

“How about your old scheme for America?” asked Dick lightly. “We were going to New York and start an up-to-date establishment for billionaires.”

“That was students’ talk.”

Dick dined with Franz and his bride and a small dog with a smell of burning rubber, in their cottage on the edge of the grounds. He felt vaguely oppressed, not by the atmosphere of modest retrenchment, nor by Frau Gregorovius, who might have been prophesied, but by the sudden contracting of horizon, to which Franz seemed so reconciled. For him the boundaries of asceticism were differently marked—he could sec it as a means to an end, even as a carrying on with a glory it would itself supply, but it was hard to think of deliberately cutting life down to the scale of an inherited suit. The domestic gestures of Franz and his wife as they turned in a cramped space lacked grace and adventure. The post-war months in France, and the lavish liquidations taking place under the aegis of American splendour, had affected Dick’s outlook. Also, men and women had made much of him, and perhaps what had brought him back to the centre of the great Swiss watch was an intuition that this was not too good for a serious man.

He made Kaethe Gregorovius feel charming, meanwhile becoming increasingly restless at the all-pervading cauliflower—simultaneously hating himself, too, for this incipience of he knew not what superficiality.

“God, am I like the rest after all?”—so he used to think starting awake at night—“Am I like the rest?”

This was poor material for a socialist but good material for those who do much of the world’s rarest work. The truth was that for some months he had been going through that partitioning of the things of youth wherein it is decided whether or not to die for what one no longer believes. In the dead white hours in Zurich staring into a stranger’s pantry across the upshine of a street-lamp, he used to think that he wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved, too, if he could fit it in.

V

THE VERANDA OF THE central building was illuminated from open French windows, save where the black shadows of stripling walls and the fantastic shadows of iron chairs slithered down into a gladiolus bed. From the figures that shuffled between the rooms Miss Warren emerged first in glimpses and then sharply when she saw him; as she crossed the threshold her face caught the room’s last light and brought it outside with her. She walked to a rhythm—all that week there had been singing in her ears, summer songs of ardent skies and wild shade, and with his arrival the singing had become so loud she could have joined in with it.

“How do you do, Captain,” she said, unfastening her eyes from his with difficulty, as though they had become entangled. “Shall we sit out here?” She stood still, her glance moving about for a moment. “It’s summer practically.”

A woman had followed her out, a dumpy woman in a shawl, and Nicole presented Dick: Senora—

Franz excused himself and Dick grouped three chairs together.

“The lovely night,” the Senora said.

“Muy bella,” agreed Nicole; then to Dick, “Are you here for a long time?”

“I’m in Zurich for a long time, if that’s what you mean.”

“This is really the first night of real spring,” the Senora suggested.

“To stay?”

“At least till July.”

“I’m leaving in June.”

“June is a lovely month here,” the Senora commented. “You should stay for June and then leave in July when it gets really too hot.”

“You’re going where?” Dick asked Nicole.

“Somewhere with my sister—somewhere exciting, I hope, because I’ve lost so much time. But perhaps they’ll think I ought to go to a quiet place at first—perhaps Como. Why don’t you come to Como?”

“Ah, Como—” began the Senora.

Within the building a trio broke into Suppe’s “Light Cavalry”. Nicole took advantage of this to stand up and the impression of her youth and beauty grew on Dick until it welled up inside him in a compact paroxysm of emotion. She smiled, a moving childish smile that was like all the lost youth in the world.

“The music’s too loud to talk against—suppose we walk around. Buenos noches, Senora.”

“G’t night—g’t night.”

They went down two steps to the path, where, in a moment, a shadow cut across it—she took his arm.

“I have some phonograph records my sister sent me from America,” she said. “Next time you come here, I’ll play them for you—I know a place to put the phonograph where no one can hear.”

“That’ll be nice.”

“Do you know ‘Hindustan’?” she asked wistfully. “I’d never heard it before but I like it. And I’ve got ‘Why Do They Call Them Babies?’ and ‘I’m Glad I Can Make You Cry.’ I suppose you’ve danced to all those tunes in Paris?”

“I haven’t been to Paris.”

Her cream-coloured dress, alternately blue or grey as they walked, and her very blonde hair, dazzled Dick—whenever he turned toward her she was smiling a little, her face lighting up like an angel’s when they came into the range of a roadside arc. She thanked him for everything, rather as if he had taken her to some party, and as Dick became less and less certain of his relation to her, her confidence increased—there was that excitement about her that seemed to reflect all the excitement of the world.

“I’m not under any restraint at all,” she said. “I’ll play you two good tunes called ‘Wait Till the Cows Come Home,’ and ‘Good-bye, Alexander.’”

He was late the next time, a week later, and Nicole was waiting for him at a point in the path which he would pass walking from Franz’s house. Her hair, drawn back of her ears, brushed her shoulders in such a way that the face seemed to have just emerged from it, as if this were the exact moment when she was coming from a wood into clear moonlight. The unknown yielded her up; Dick wished she had no background, that she was just a girl lost with no address save the night from which she had come. They went to the cache where she had left the phonograph, turned a corner by the workshop, climbed a rock, and sat down behind a low wall, facing miles and miles of rolling night.

They were in America now; even Franz with his conception of Dick as an irresistible Lothario would never have guessed that they had gone so far away. They were so sorry, dear; they went down to meet each other in a taxi, honey; they had preferences in smiles and had met in Hindustan, and shortly afterward they must have quarrelled, for nobody knew and nobody seemed to care—yet finally one of them had gone and left the other crying, only to feel blue, to feel sad.

The thin tunes, holding lost times and future hopes in liaison, twisted upon the Valais night. In the lulls of the phonograph a cricket held the scene together with a single note. By and by Nicole stopped playing the machine and sang to him.

“Lay a silver dollar
On the ground
And watch it roll
Because it’s round—

On the pure parting of her lips no breath hovered. Dick stood up suddenly.

“What’s the matter, you don’t like it?”

“Of course I do.”

“Our cook at home taught it to me:”

“A woman never knows
What a good man she’s got
Till after she turns him down—”

“You like it?”

She smiled at him, making sure that the smile gathered up everything inside her, and directed it toward him, making him a profound promise of herself for so little, for the beat of a response, the assurance of a complementary vibration in him. Minute by minute the sweetness drained down into her out of the willow trees, out of the dark world.

She stood up and, stumbling over the phonograph, was momentarily against him, leaning into the hollow of his rounded shoulder—then apart.”I’ve got one more record.—Have you heard “So Long, Letty?” I suppose you have.““Honestly, you don’t understand—I haven’t heard a thing.”

Nor known, nor smelt, nor tasted, he might have added; only hot-cheeked girls in hot secret rooms. The young maidens he had known at New Haven in 1914 kissed men, saying “There!” hands at the man’s chest to push him away. Now there was this scarcely saved waif of disaster bringing him the essence of a continent….

VI

IT WAS MAY WHEN he next found her. The luncheon in Zurich was a council of caution; obviously the logic of his life tended away from the girl; yet when a stranger stared at her from a nearby table, male eyes burning disturbingly like an uncharted light, he turned to the man with an urbane version of intimidation and broke the regard.

“He was just a peeper,” he explained cheerfully. “He was just looking at your clothes. Why do you have so many different clothes?”

“Sister says we’re very rich,” she offered humbly. “Since Grandmother is dead.”

“I forgive you.”

He was enough older than Nicole to take pleasure in her youthful vanities and delights, the way she paused fractionally in front of the hall mirror on leaving the restaurant, so that the incorruptible quicksilver could give her back to herself. He delighted in her stretching out her hands to new octaves now that she found herself beautiful and rich. He tried honestly to divorce her from any obsessions that he had stitched her together—glad to see her build up happiness and confidence apart from him; the difficulty was that, eventually, Nicole brought everything to his feet, gifts of sacrificial ambrosia, of worshipping myrtle.

The first week of summer found Dick re-established in Zurich. He had arranged his pamphlets and what work he had done in the army into a pattern from which he intended to make his revision of “A Psychology for Psychiatrists.” He thought he had a publisher; he had established contact with a poor student who would iron out his errors in German. Franz considered it a rash business, but one day at luncheon Dick pointed out the disarming modesty of the theme.

“This is stuff I’ll never know so well again,” he insisted. “I have a hunch it’s a thing that only fails to be basic because it’s never had material recognition. The weakness of this profession is its attraction for the man a little crippled and broken. Within the walls of the profession he compensates by tending toward the clinical, the ‘practical’—he has won his battle without a struggle.”

“On the contrary, you arc a good man, Franz, because fate selected you for your profession before you were bom. You better thank God you had no ‘bent’—I got to be a psychiatrist because there was a girl at St Hilda’s in Oxford that went to the same lectures. Maybe I’m getting trite but I don’t want to let my current ideas slide away with a few dozen glasses of beer.”

“All right,” Franz answered. “You are an American. You can do this without professional harm. I do not like these generalities. Soon you will be writing little books called ‘Deep Thoughts for the Layman,’ so simplified that they are positively guaranteed not to cause thinking. If my father were alive he would look at you and grunt, Dick. He would take his napkin and fold it so, and hold his napkin ring, this very one‘—he held it up, a boar’s head was carved in the brown wood—’and he would say, ‘Well, my impression is—’ then he would look at you and think suddenly, ‘What is the use?’ then he would stop and grunt again; then we would be at the end of dinner.”

“I am alone to-day,” said Dick testily. “But I may not be alone to-morrow. After that I’ll fold up my napkin like your father and grunt.”

Franz waited a moment.

“How about our patient?” he asked.

“I don’t know.”

“Well, you should know about her by now.”

“I like her. She’s attractive. What do you want me to do—take her up in the edelweiss?”

“No, I thought since you go in for scientific books you might have an idea.”

“—devote my life to her?”

Franz called his wife in the kitchen: “Du lieber Gott! Bitte, bringe Dick noch ein Glas Bier.”

“I don’t want any more if I’ve got to see Dohmler.”

“We think it’s best to have “a programme. Four weeks have passed away—apparently the girl is in love with you. That’s not our business if we were in the world, but here in the clinic we have a stake in the mailer.”

“I’ll do whatever Doctor Dohmler says,” Dick agreed.

But he had little faith that Dohmler would throw much light on the matter; he himself was the incalculable element involved. By no conscious volition of his own, the thing had drifted into his hands. It reminded him of a scene in his childhood when everyone in the house was looking for the lost key to the silver closet, Dick knowing he had hid it under the handkerchiefs in his mother’s top drawer; at that time he had experienced a philosophical detachment, and this was repeated now when he and Franz went together to Professor Dohmler’s office.

The professor, his face beautiful under straight whiskers, like a vine-overgrown veranda of some fine old house, disarmed him. Dick knew some individuals with more talent, but no person of a class qualitatively superior to Dohmler.

—Six months later he thought the same way when he saw Dohmler dead, the light out on the veranda, the vines of his whiskers tickling his stiff white collar, the many battles that had swayed before the chink-tike eyes stilled forever under the frail delicate lids—-

“…Good day, sir.” He stood formally, thrown back to the army.

Professor Dohmler interlaced his tranquil fingers. Franz spoke in terms half of liaison officer, half of secretary, till his senior cut through him in mid-sentence.

“We have gone a certain way,” he said mildly. “It’s you, Doctor Diver, who can best help us now.”

Routed out, Dick confessed: “I’m not so straight on it myself.”

“I have nothing to do with your personal reactions,” said Dohmler. “But I have much to do with the fact that this so-called ‘transference’‘—he darted a short ironic look at Franz, which the latter returned in kind—’must be terminated. Miss Nicole does well indeed, but she is in no condition to survive what she might interpret as a tragedy.”

Again Franz began to speak, but Doctor Dohmler motioned him silent.

“I realize that your position has been difficult.”

“Yes, it has.”

Now the professor sat back and laughed, saying on the last syllable of his laughter, with his sharp little grey eyes shining through: “Perhaps you have got sentimentally involved yourself.”

Aware that he was being drawn on, Dick, too, laughed.

“She’s a pretty girl—anybody responds to that to a certain extent. I have no intention—”

Again Franz tried to speak—again Dohmler stopped him with a question directed pointedly at Dick. “Have you thought of going away?”

“I can’t go away.”

Doctor Dohmler turned to Franz: “Then we can send Miss Warren away.”

“As you think best. Professor Dohmler,” Dick conceded. “It’s certainly a situation.”

Professor Dohmler raised himself like a legless man mounting a pair of crutches.

“But it is a professional situation,” he cried quietly.

He sighed himself back into his chair, waiting for the reverberating thunder to die out about the room. Dick saw that Dohmler had reached his climax, and he was not sure that he himself had survived it. When the thunder had diminished Franz managed to get his word in.

“Doctor Diver is a man of fine character,” he said. “I feel he only has to appreciate the situation in order to deal correctly with it. In my opinion Dick can co-operate right here, without anyone going away.”

“How do you feel about that?” Professor Dohmler asked Dick.

Dick felt churlish in the face of the situation; at the same time he realized in the silence after Dohmler’s pronouncement that the state of inanimation could not be indefinitely prolonged; suddenly he spilled everything.

“I’m half in love with her—the question of marrying her has passed through my mind.”

“Tch! Tch!” uttered Franz.

“Wait.” Dohmler warned him. Franz refused to wait: “What! And devote half your life to being doctor and nurse and all—never! I know what these cases are. One time in twenty it’s finished in the first push—better never see her again!”

“What do you think?” Dohmler asked Dick.

“Of course Franz is right.”

VII

IT WAS LATE AFTERNOON when they wound up the discussion as to what Dick should do: he must be most kind and yet eliminate himself. When the doctors stood up at last, Dick’s eyes fell outside the window to where a light rain was falling—Nicole was waiting, expectant, somewhere in that rain. When presently he went out, buttoning his oilskin at the throat, pulling down the brim of his hat, he came upon her immediately under the roof of the main entrance.

“I know a new place we can go,” she said. “When I was ill I didn’t mind sitting inside with the others in the evening—what they said seemed like everything else. Naturally now I see them as ill and it’s—it’s—”

“You’ll be leaving soon.”

“Oh, soon. My sister, Beth, but she’s always been called Baby, she’s coming in a few weeks to take me somewhere; after that I’ll be back here for a last month.”

“The older sister?”

“Oh, quite a bit older. She’s twenty-four—she’s very English. She lives in London with my father’s sister. She was engaged to an Englishman but he was killed—I never saw him.”

Her face, ivory gold against the blurred sunset that strove through the rain, had a promise Dick had never seen before: the high cheekbones, the faintly wan quality, cool rather than feverish, was reminiscent of the frame of a promising colt—a creature whose life did not promise to be only a projection of youth upon a greyer screen, but instead, a true growing; the face would be handsome in middle life; it would be handsome in old age: the essential structure and the economy were there.

“What are you looking at?”

“I was just thinking that you’re going to be rather happy.”

Nicole was frightened: “Am I? All right—things couldn’t be worse than they have been.”

In the covered woodshed to which she had led him, she sat cross-legged upon her golf shoes, her burberry wound about her and her cheeks stung alive by the damp air. Gravely she returned his gaze, taking in his somewhat proud carriage that never quite yielded to the wooden post against which he leaned; she looked into his face that always tried to discipline itself into moulds of attentive seriousness, after excursions into joys and mockeries of its own. That part of him which seemed to fit his reddish Irish colouring she knew least; she was afraid of it, yet more anxious to explore—this was his more masculine side: the other part, the trained part, the consideration in the polite eyes, she expropriated without question, as most women did.

“At least this institution has been good for languages,” said Nicole. “I’ve spoken French with two doctors, and German with the nurses, and Italian, or something like it, with a couple of scrub-women and one of the patients, and I’ve picked up a lot of Spanish from another.”

“That’s fine.”

He tried to arrange an attitude, but no logic seemed forthcoming.

“—Music too. Hope you didn’t think I was only interested in ragtime. I practise every day—the last few months I’ve been taking a course in Zurich on the history of music. In fact it was all that kept me going at times—music and the drawing.” She leaned suddenly and twisted a loose strip from the sole of her shoe, and then looked up. “I’d like to draw you just the way you are now.”

It made him sad when she brought out her accomplishments for his approval.

“I envy you. At present I don’t seem to be interested in anything except my work.”

“Oh, I think that’s fine for a man,” she said quickly. “But for a girl I think she ought to have lots of minor accomplishments and pass them on to her children.”

“I suppose so,” said Dick with deliberated indifference.

Nicole sat quiet. Dick wished she would speak so that he could play the easy role of wet blanket, but now she sat quiet.

“You’re all well,” he said. “Try to forget the past; don’t overdo things for a year or so. Go back to America and be a debutante and fall in love—and be happy.”

“I couldn’t fall in love.” Her injured shoe scraped a cocoon of must from the log on which she sat.

“Sure you can,” Dick insisted. “Not for a year, maybe, but sooner or later.” Then he added brutally: “You can have a perfectly normal life with a houseful of beautiful descendants. The very fact that you could make a complete come-back at your age proves that the precipitating factors were pretty near everything. Young woman, you’ll be pulling your weight long after your friends are carried off screaming.”

—But there was a look of pain in her eyes as she took the rough dose, the harsh reminder.

“I know I wouldn’t be fit to marry anyone for a long time,” she said humbly.

Dick was too upset to say any more. He looked out into the grain field trying to recover his hard brassy attitude.

“You’ll be all right—everybody here believes in you. Why, Doctor Gregory is so proud of you that he’ll probably—”

“I hate Doctor Gregory.”

“Well, you shouldn’t.”

Nicole’s world had fallen to pieces, but it was only a flimsy and scarcely created world; beneath it her emotions and instincts fought on. Was it an hour ago she had waited by the entrance, wearing her hope like a corsage at her belt?

… Dress stay crisp for him, button stay put, bloom narcissus—air stay still and sweet.

“It will be nice to have fun again,” she fumbled on. For a moment she entertained a desperate idea of telling him how rich she was, what big houses she had lived in, that really she was a valuable property—for a moment she made herself into her grandfather, Sid Warren, the horse-trader. But she survived the temptation to confuse all values and shut these matters into their Victorian side-chambers—even though there was no home left to her, save emptiness and pain.

“I have to go back to the clinic. It’s not raining now.”

Dick walked beside her, feeling her unhappiness, and wanting to drink the rain that touched her cheek.

“I have some new records,” she said. “I can hardly wait to play them. Do you know—”

After supper that evening, Dick thought, he would finish the break; also he wanted to kick Franz’s bottom for having partially introduced him to such a sordid business. He waited in the hall. His eyes followed a beret, not wet with waiting like Nicole’s beret, but covering a skull recently operated on. Beneath it human eyes peered, found him and came over:

“Bonjour, Docteur.”

“Bonjour, Monsieur.”

“II fait beau temps.”

“Oui, merveilleux.”

“Vous etes ici maintenant?”

“Non, pour la journee seulement.”

“Ah, bon. Alors—au revoir. Monsieur.”

Glad at having survived another contact, the wretch in the beret moved away. Dick waited. Presently a nurse came downstairs and delivered him a message.

“Miss Warren asks to be excused. Doctor. She wants to lie down. She wants to have dinner upstairs to-night.”

The nurse hung on his response, half expecting him to imply that Miss Warren’s attitude was pathological.

“Oh, I see. Well—” He rearranged the flow of his own saliva, the pulse of his heart. “I hope she feels better. Thanks.”

He was puzzled and discontent. At any rate it freed him.

Leaving a note for Franz begging off from supper, he walked through the countryside to the tram station. As he reached the platform, with spring twilight gilding the rails and the glass in the slot machines, he began to feel that the station, the hospital, was hovering between being centripetal and centrifugal. He felt frightened. He was glad when the substantial cobblestones of Zurich clicked once more under his shoes.

He expected to hear from Nicole next day, but there was no word. Wondering if she was ill, he called the clinic and talked to Franz.

“She came downstairs to luncheon yesterday and to-day,” said Franz. “She seemed a little abstracted and in the clouds. How did it go off?”

Dick tried to plunge over the Alpine crevasse between the sexes.

“We didn’t get to it—at least I didn’t think we did. I tried to be distant, but I didn’t think enough happened to change her attitude if it ever went deep.”

Perhaps his vanity had been hurt that there was no coup de grace to administer.

“From some things she said to her nurse I’m inclined to think she understood.”

“All right.”

“It was the best thing that could have happened. She doesn’t seem over-agitated—only a little in the clouds.”

“All right, then.”

“Dick, come soon and see me.”

VIII

DURING THE NEXT WEEKS Dick experienced a vast dissatisfaction. The pathological origin and mechanistic defeat of the affair left a flat and metallic taste. Nicole’s emotions had been used unfairly—what if they turned out to have been his own? Necessarily he must absent himself from felicity awhile—in dreams he saw her walking on the clinic path swinging her wide straw hat.

One time he saw her in person; as he walked past the Palace Hotel, a magnificent Rolls curved into the half-moon entrance. Small within its gigantic proportions, and buoyed up by the power of a hundred superfluous horses, sat Nicole and a young woman who he assumed was her sister. Nicole saw him and momentarily her lips parted in an expression of fright. Dick shifted his hat and passed, yet for a moment the air around him was loud with the circlings of all the goblins on the Gross-Munster. He tried to write the matter out of his mind in a memorandum that went into detail as to the solemn regime before her; the possibilities of another “push” of the malady under the stresses which the world would inevitably supply—in all a memorandum that would have been convincing to anyone save to him who had written it.

The total value of this effort was to make him realize once more how far his emotions were involved; thenceforth he resolutely provided antidotes. One was the telephone girl from Bar-sur-Aube, now touring Europe from Nice to Coblenz, in a desperate round-up of the men she had known in her never-to-be-equalled holiday; another was the making of arrangements to get home on a government transport in August; a third was a consequent intensification of work on his proofs for the book that this autumn was to be presented to the German-speaking world of psychiatry.

Dick had outgrown the book; he wanted now to do more spade work; if he got an exchange fellowship he could count on plenty of routine.

Meanwhile he had projected a new work: An Attempt at a Uniform and Pragmatic Classification of the Neuroses and Psychoses, Based on an Examination of Fifteen Hundred Pre-Kraepelin and Post-Kraepelin Cases as they would be Diagnosed in the Terminology of the Different Contemporary Schools—and another sonorous paragraph—Together with a Chronology of Such Subdivisions of Opinion as Have Risen Independently.

This title would look monumental in German.

(Ein Versuch die Neurosen und Psychosen gleichmassig und pragmatisch zu klassifizieren auf Grund der Untersuchung von funfzehn hundert pre-Kraepelin und post-Kraepelin Fallen wie sie diagnostiziert sein wurden in der Terminologic von den verschiedenen Schulen der Gegenwart—and another sonorous paragraph—Zusammen mit einer Chronologie solcher Subdivisionen der Meinung welche unabhangig entstanden sind.)

Going into Montreux Dick pedalled slowly, gaping at the Dent du Midi whenever possible, and blinded by glimpses of the lake through the alleys of the shore hotels. He was conscious of the groups of English, emergent after four years and walking with detective-story suspicion in their eyes, as though they were about to be assaulted in this questionable country by German trainbands. There were building and awakening everywhere on this mound of debris formed by a mountain torrent. At Berne and at Lausanne on the way south, Dick had been eagerly asked if there would be Americans this year—“By August, if not in June?”

He wore leather shorts, an army shirt, mountain shoes. In his knapsack were a cotton suit and a change of underwear. At the Glion funicular he checked his bicycle and took a small beer on the terrace of the station buffet, meanwhile watching the little bug crawl down the eighty-degree slope of the hill. His ear was full of dried blood from La Tour de Pelz, where he had sprinted under the impression that he was a spoiled athlete. He asked for alcohol and cleared up the exterior while the funicular slid down into port. He saw his bicycle embarked, slung his knapsack into the lower compartment of the car, and followed it in.

Mountain-climbing cars are built on a slant similar to the angle of a hat-brim of a man who doesn’t want to be recognized. As water gushed from the chamber under the car, Dick was impressed with the ingenuity of the whole idea—a complementary car was now taking on mountain water at the top and would pull the lightened car up by gravity, as soon as the brakes were released. It must have been a great inspiration. In the seat across, a couple of British were discussing the cable itself.

“The ones made in England always last five or six years. Two years ago the Germans underbid us, and how long do you think their cable lasted?”

“How long?”

“A year and ten months. Then the Swiss sold it to the Italians. They don’t have rigid inspections of cables.”

“I can see it would be a terrible thing for Switzerland if a cable broke.”

The conductor shut a door; he telephoned his confrere among the undulati, and with a jerk the car was pulled upward, heading for a pinpoint on an emerald hill above. After it cleared the low roofs, the skies of Vaud, Valais, Swiss Savoy, and Geneva spread around the passengers in cyclorama. On the centre of the lake, cooled by the piercing current of the Rhone, lay the true centre of the Western world. Upon it floated swans like boats and boats like swans, both lost in the nothingness of the heartless beauty. It was a bright day, with sun glittering on the grass beach below and the white courts of the Kursaal. The figures on the courts threw no shadows.

When Chillon and the island palace of Salagnon came into view Dick turned his eyes inward. The funicular was above the highest houses of the shore; on both sides a tangle of foliage and flowers culminated at intervals in masses of colour. It was a rail-side garden, and in the car was a sign: Defense de cueillir les fleurs.

Though one must not pick flowers on the way up, the blossoms trailed in as they passed—Dorothy Perkins roses dragged patiently through each compartment, slowly waggling with the motion of the funicular, letting go at the lust to swing back to their rosy cluster. Again and again these branches went through the car.

In the compartment above and in front of Dick’s, a group of English were standing up and exclaiming upon the back-drop of sky, when suddenly there was a confusion among them—they parted to give passage to a couple of young people who made apologies and scrambled over into the rear compartment of the funicular—Dick’s compartment. The young man was a Latin with the eyes of a stuffed deer; the girl was Nicole.

The two climbers gasped momentarily from their efforts; as they settled into seats, laughing and crowding the English to the corners, Nicole said, “Hello.” She was lovely to look at; immediately Dick saw that something was different; in a second he realized it was her fine-spun hair, bobbed like Irene Castle’s and fluffed into curls. She wore a sweater of powder blue and a white tennis skirt—she was the first morning in May and every taint of the clinic was departed.

“Plunk!” she gasped. “Whoo-oo, that guard. They’ll arrest us at the next stop. Doctor Diver, the Conte de Marmora,”

“Gec-imminy!” She felt her new hair, panting. “Sister bought first-class tickets—it’s a matter of principle with her.” She and Marmora exchanged glances and shouted: “Then we found that first class is the hearse part behind the chauffeur—shut in with curtains for a rainy day, so you can’t see anything. But Sister’s very dignified—” Again Nicole and Marmora laughed with young intimacy.

“Where you bound?” asked Dick.

“Caux. You, too?” Nicole looked at his costume. “That your bicycle they got up in front?”

“Yes. I’m going to coast down Monday.”

“With me on your handle-bars? I mean, really—will you? I can’t think of more fun.”

“But I will carry you down in my arms,” Marmora protested intensely. “I will roller-skate you—or I will throw you and you will fall slowly like a feather.”

The delight in Nicole’s face—to be a feather again instead of a plummet, to float and not to drag. She was a carnival to watch—at times primly coy, posing, grimacing and gesturing—sometimes the shadow fell and the dignity of old suffering flowed down into her finger tips. Dick wished himself away from her, fearing that he was a reminder of a world well left behind. He resolved to go to the other hotel.

When the funicular came to rest those new to it stirred in suspension between the blues of two heavens. It was merely for a mysterious exchange between the conductor of the car going up and the conductor of the car coming down. Then up and up over a forest path and a gorge—then again up a hill that became solid with narcissus, from passengers to sky. The people in Montreux playing tennis in the lakeside courts were pinpoints now. Something new was in the air; freshness—freshness embodying itself in music as the car slid into Glion and they heard the orchestra in the hotel garden.

When they changed to the mountain train the music was drowned by the rushing water released from the hydraulic chamber. Almost overhead was Caux, where the thousand windows of a hotel burned in the late sun.

But the approach was different—a leather-lunged engine pushed the passengers round and round in a corkscrew, mounting, rising; they chugged through low-level clouds and for a moment Dick lost Nicole’s face in the spray of the slanting donkey-engine; they skirted a lost streak of wind with the hotel growing in size at each spiral, until with a vast surprise they were there, on top of the sunshine.

In the confusion of arrival, as Dick slung his knapsack and started forward on the platform to get his bicycle, Nicole was beside him.

“Aren’t you at our hotel?” she asked.

“I’m economizing.”

“Will you come down and have dinner?” Some confusion with baggage ensued. “This is my sister—Doctor Diver from Zurich.”

Dick bowed to a young woman of twenty-four, tall and confident. She was both formidable and vulnerable, he decided, remembering other women with flower-like mouths grooved for bits.

“I’ll drop in after dinner,” Dick promised. “First I must get acclimatized.”

He wheeled off his bicycle, feeling Nicole’s eyes following him, feeling her helpless first love, feeling it twist around inside him. He went three hundred yards up the slope to the other hotel, he engaged a room and found himself washing without a memory of the intervening ten minutes, only a sort of drunken flush pierced with voices, unimportant voices that did not know how much he was loved.

IX

THEY WERE WAITING FOR him and incomplete without him. He was still the incalculable element; Miss Warren and the young Italian wore their anticipation as obviously as Nicole. The salon of the hotel, a room of fabled acoustics, was stripped for dancing, but there was a small gallery of Englishwomen of a certain age, with neckbands, dyed hair, and faces powdered pinkish grey; and of American women of a certain age, with snowy-white transformations, black dresses, and lips of cherry red. Miss Warren and Marmora were at a corner table. Nicole was diagonally across from them forty yards away, and as Dick arrived he heard her voice:

“Can you hear me? I’m speaking naturally. ”

“Perfectly.”

“Hello, Doctor Diver. ”

“What’s this?”

“You realize the people in the centre of the floor can’t hear what I say, but you can? ”

“A waiter told us about it,” said Miss Warren. “Corner to comer—it’s like wireless.”

It was exciting up on the mountain, like a ship at sea. Presently Marmora’s parents joined them. They treated the Warrens with respect—Dick gathered that their fortunes had something to do with a bank in Milan that had something to do with the Warren fortunes. But Baby Warren wanted to talk to Dick, wanted to talk to him with the impetus that sent her out vagrantly toward all new men, as though she were on an inelastic tether and considered that she might as well get to the end of it as soon as possible. She crossed and recrossed her knees frequently in the manner of tall restless virgins.

“—Nicole told me that you took part care of her, and had a lot to do with her getting well. What I can’t understand is what we’re supposed to do—they were so indefinite at the sanatorium; they only told me she ought to be natural and gay. I knew the Marmoras were up here so I asked Tino to meet us at the funicular. And you see what happens—the very first thing Nicole has him crawling over the sides of the car as if they were both insane—”

“That was absolutely normal,” Dick laughed. “I’d call it a good sign. They were showing off for each other.”

“But how can I tell? Before I knew it, almost in front of my eyes, she had her hair cut off, in Zurich, because of a picture in Vanity Fair.”

“That’s all right. She’s a schizoid—a permanent eccentric. You can’t change that.”

“What is it?”

“Just what I said—an eccentric.”

“Well, how can any one tell what’s eccentric and what’s crazy?”

“Nothing is going to be crazy—Nicole is all fresh and happy, you needn’t be afraid.”

Baby shifted her knees about—she was a compendium of all the discontented women who had loved Byron a hundred years before, yet, in spite of the tragic affair with the Guards officer, there was something wooden and onanistic about her.

“I don’t mind the responsibility,” she declared, “but I’m in the air. We’ve never had anything like this in the family before—we know Nicole had some shock and my opinion is it was about a boy, but we don’t really know. Father says he would have shot him if he could have found out.”

The orchestra was playing “Poor Butterfly”; young Marmora was dancing with his mother. It was a tune new enough to them all. Listening, and watching Nicole’s shoulders as she chattered to the elder Marmora, whose hair was dashed with white like a piano keyboard, Dick thought of the shoulders of a violin, and then he thought of the dishonour, the secret. Oh, butterfly—the moments pass into hours—-

“Actually I have a plan,” Baby continued with apologetic hardness. “It may seem absolutely impractical to you but they say Nicole will need to be looked after for a few years. I don’t know whether you know Chicago or not—”

“I don’t.”

“Well, there’s a North Side and a South Side and they’re very much separated. The North Side is chic and all that, and we’ve always lived over there, at least for many years, but lots of old families, old Chicago families, if you know what I mean, still live on the South Side. The University is there. I mean it’s stuffy to some people, but anyhow it’s different from the North Side. I don’t know whether you understand.”

He nodded. With some concentration he had been able to follow her.

“Now of course we have lots of connexions there—Father controls certain chairs and fellowships and so forth at the University, and I thought if we took Nicole home and threw her with that crowd—you see she’s quite musical and speaks all these languages—what could be better in her condition than if she fell in love with some good doctor—”

A burst of hilarity surged up in Dick, the Warrens were going to buy Nicole a doctor—You got a nice doctor you can let us use? There was no use worrying about Nicole when they were in the position of being able to buy her a nice young doctor, the paint scarcely dry on him.

“But how about the doctor?” he said automatically.

“There must be many who’d jump at the chance.”

The dancers were back, but Baby whispered quickly:

“This is the sort of thing I mean. Now where is Nicole—she’s gone off somewhere. Is she upstairs in her room? What am I supposed to do ? I never know whether it’s something innocent or whether I ought to go find her.”

“Perhaps she just wants to be by herself—people living alone get used to loneliness.” Seeing that Miss Warren was not listening he stopped. “I’ll take a look around.”

For a moment all the outdoors shut in with mist was like spring with the curtains drawn. Life was gathered near the hotel. Dick passed some cellar windows where bus boys sat on bunks and played cards over a litre of Spanish wine. As he approached the promenade, the stars began to come through the white crests of the high Alps. On the horseshoe walk overlooking the lake Nicole was the figure motionless between two lamp stands, and he approached silently across the grass. She turned to him with an expression of: “Here you are,” and for a moment he was sorry he had come.

“Your sister wondered.”

“Oh!” She was accustomed to being watched. With an effort she explained herself: “Sometimes I get a little—it gets a little too much. I’ve lived so quietly. To-night that music was too much. It made me want to cry—”

“I understand.”

“This has been an awfully exciting day.”

“I know.”

“I don’t want to do any thing anti-social—I’ve caused everybody enough trouble. But to-night I wanted to get away.”

It occurred to Dick suddenly, as it might occur to a dying man that he had forgotten to tell where his will was, that Nicole had been “re-educated” by Dohmler and the ghostly generations behind him; it occurred to him also that there would be so much she would have to be told. But having recorded this wisdom within himself, he yielded to the insistent face-value of the situation and said;

“You’re a nice person—just keep using your own judgement about yourself.”

“You like me?”

“Of course.”

“Would you—” They were strolling along towards the dim end of the horseshoe, two hundred yards ahead. “If I hadn’t been sick would you—I mean, would I have been the sort of girl you might have—oh, slush, you know what I mean.”

He was in for it now, possessed by a vast irrationality. She was so near that he felt his breathing change, but again his training came to his aid in a boy’s laugh and a trite remark.

“You’re teasing yourself, my dear. Once I knew a man who fell in love with his nurse—” The anecdote rambled on, punctuated by their footsteps. Suddenly Nicole interrupted in succinct Chicagoese: “Bull!”

“That’s a very vulgar expression.”

“What about it?” she flared up. “You don’t think I’ve got any common sense—before I was sick I didn’t have any, but I have now. And if I don’t know you’re the most attractive man I ever met you must think I’m still crazy. It’s my hard luck, all right—but don’t pretend I don’t know—I know everything about you and me.”

Dick was at an additional disadvantage. He remembered the statement of the elder Miss Warren as to the young doctors that could be purchased in the intellectual stockyards of the South Side of Chicago, and he hardened for a moment. “You’re a fetching kid, but I couldn’t fall in love.”

“You won’t give me a chance.”

“What!”

The impertinence, the right to invade implied, astounded him. Short of anarchy he could not think of any chance that Nicole Warren deserved.

“Give me a chance now.”

The voice fell low, sank into her breast and stretched the tight bodice over her heart as she came up close. He felt the young lips, her body sighing in relief against the arm growing stronger to hold her. There were now no more plans than if Dick had arbitrarily made some indissoluble mixture, with atoms joined and inseparable; you could throw it all out but never again could they fit back into atomic scale. As he held her and tasted her, and as she curved in further and further towards him, with his own lips, new to herself, drowned and engulfed in love, yet solaced and triumphant, he was thankful to have an existence at all, if only as a reflection in her wet eyes.

“My God,” he gasped, “you’re fun to kiss.”

That was talk, but Nicole had a better hold on him now and she held it; she turned coquette and walked away, leaving him as suspended as in the funicular of the afternoon. She felt: There, that’ll show him, how conceited; how he could do with me; oh, wasn’t it wonderful! I’ve got him, he’s mine. Now in the sequence came flight, but it was also so sweet and new that she dawdled, wanting to draw all of it in.

She shivered suddenly. Two thousand feet below she saw the necklace and bracelet of lights that were Montreux and Vevey, beyond them a dim pendant of Lausanne. From down there somewhere ascended a faint sound of dance music. Nicole was up in her head now, cool as cool, trying to collate the sentimentalities other childhood, as deliberate as a man getting drunk after battle. But she was still afraid of Dick, who stood near her leaning, characteristically, against the iron fence that rimmed the horseshoe; and this prompted her to say: “I can remember how I stood waiting for you in the garden—holding all myself in my arms like a basket of flowers. It was that to me anyhow—I thought I was sweet—waiting to hand that basket to you.”

He breathed over her shoulder and turned her insistently about; she kissed him several times, her face getting big every time she came close, her hands holding him by the shoulders.

“It’s raining hard.”

Suddenly there was a booming from the wine slopes across the lake; cannons were shooting at hail-bearing clouds in order to break them. The lights of the promenade went off, went on again. Then the storm came swiftly, first falling from the heavens, then doubly falling in torrents from the mountains and washing loud down the roads and stone ditches; with it came a dark, frightening sky and savage filaments of lightning and world-splitting thunder, while ragged, destroying clouds fled along past the hotel. Mountains and lake disappeared—the hotel crouched amid tumult, chaos, and darkness.

By this time Dick and Nicole had reached the vestibule where Baby Warren and the three Marmoras were anxiously awaiting them. It was exciting coming out of the wet fog, with the doors banging, to stand and laugh and quiver with emotion, wind in their ears and rain on their clothes. Now in the ballroom the orchestra was playing a Strauss waltz, high and confusing.

… For Doctor Diver to marry a mental patient? How did it happen? Where did it begin?

“Won’t you come back after you’ve changed?” Baby Warren asked after a close scrutiny.

“I haven’t got any change, except some shorts.”

As he trudged up to his hotel in a borrowed raincoat he kept laughing derisively in his throat.

“Big chance—oh, yes. My God!—they decided to buy a doctor? Well, they better stick to whoever they’ve got in Chicago.” Revolted by his harshness he made amends to Nicole, remembering that nothing had ever felt so young as her lips, remembering rain like tears shed for him that lay upon her softly shining porcelain cheeks… The silence of the storm ceasing woke him about three o’clock and he went to the window. Her beauty climbed the rolling slope, it came into the room, rustling ghost-like through the curtains.

… He climbed two thousand metres to Rocher de Naye the following morning, amused by the fact that his conductor of the day before was using his day off to climb also.

Then Dick descended all the way to Montreux for a swim, got back to his hotel in time for dinner. Two notes awaited him.

“I’m not ashamed about last night—it was the nicest thing that ever happened to me and even if I never saw you again, Mon Capitaine, I would be glad it happened.”

That was disarming enough—the heavy shade of Dohm-ler retreated as Dick opened the second envelope:

DEAR DOCTOR DIVER: I phoned but you were out. I wonder if I may ask you a great big favour. Unforeseen circumstances call me back to Paris, and I find I can make better time by way of Lausanne. Can you let Nicole ride as far as Zurich with you, since you are going back Monday? and drop her at the sanatorium? Is this too much to ask?
Sincerely,
BETH EVAN WARREN

Dick was furious—Miss Warren had known he had a bicycle with him; yet she had so phrased her note that it was impossible to refuse. Throw us together! Sweet propinquity and the Warren money!

He was wrong! Baby Warren had no such intentions. She had looked Dick over with worldly eyes, she had measured him with the warped rule of an Anglophile and found him wanting—in spite of the fact that she found him toothsome. But for her he was too “intellectual” and she pigeonholed him with a shabby-snobby crowd she had once known in London—he put himself out too much to be really of the correct stuff. She could not see how he could be made into her idea of an aristocrat.

In addition to that he was stubborn—she had seen him leave her conversation and get down behind his eyes in that odd way that people did, half a dozen times. She had not liked Nicole’s free and easy manner as a child and now she was sensibly habituated to thinking of her as a “gone coon”; and anyhow Doctor Diver was not the sort of medical man she could envisage in the family.

She only wanted to use him innocently as a convenience.

But her request had the effect that Dick assumed she desired. A ride in a train can be a terrible, heavy-hearted, or comic thing; it can be a trial flight; it can be a prefiguration of another journey, just as a given day with a friend can be long, from the taste of hurry in the morning up to the realization of both being hungry and taking food together. Then comes the afternoon with the journey fading and dying but quickening again at the end. Dick was sad to see Nicole’s meagre joy; yet it was a relief for her, going back to the only home she knew. They made no love that day, but when he left her outside the sad door on the Zurichsee and she turned and looked at him he knew her problem was one they had together for good now.

X

IN ZURICH IN SEPTEMBER Doctor Diver had tea with Baby Warren.

“I think it’s ill advised,” she said, “I’m not sure I truly understand your motives.”

“Don’t let’s be unpleasant.”

“After all I’m Nicole’s sister.”

“That doesn’t give you the right to be unpleasant.” It irritated Dick that he knew so much that he could not tell her. “Nicole’s rich, but that doesn’t make me an adventurer.”

“That’s just it,” complained Baby stubbornly. “Nicole’s rich.”

“Just how much money has she got?” he asked.

She started; and with a silent laugh he continued, “You see how silly this is? I’d rather talk to some man in your family —”

“Everything’s been left to me,” she persisted. “It isn’t we think you’re an adventurer. We don’t know who you are.”

“I’m a doctor of medicine,” he said. “My father is a clergyman, now retired. We lived in Buffalo and my past is open to investigation. I went to New Haven; after that I was a Rhodes scholar. My great-grandfather was Governor of North Carolina and I’m a direct descendant of Mad Anthony Wayne.”

“Who was Mad Anthony Wayne?” Baby asked suspiciously.

“Mad Anthony Wayne?”

“I think there’s enough madness in this affair.”

He shook his head hopelessly, just as Nicole came out on the hotel terrace and looked around for them.

“He was too mad to leave as much money as Marshall Field,” he said.

“That’s all very well—-”

Baby was right and she knew it. Face to face, her father would have it on almost any clergyman. They were an American ducal family without a title—the very name written in a hotel register, signed to an introduction, used in a difficult situation, caused a psychological metamorphosis in people, and in return this change had crystallized her own sense of position. She knew these facts from the English, who ad known them for more than two hundred years. But she did not know that twice Dick had come close to flinging the marriage in her face. All that saved it this time was Nicole finding their table and glowing away, white and fresh and new in the September afternoon.

How do you do, lawyer. We’re going to Como to-morrow for a week and then back to Zurich. That’s why I wanted you and sister to settle this, because it doesn’t matter to us how much I’m allowed. We’re going to live very quietly in Zurich for two years and Dick has enough to take care of us. No, Baby, I’m more practical than you think—It’s only for clothes and things I’ll need it. … Why, that’s more than—can the estate really afford to give me all that? I know I’ll never manage to spend it. Do you have that much? Why do you have more—is it because I’m supposed to be incompetent? All right, let my share pile up then… No, Dick refuses to have anything whatever to do with it. I’ll have to feel bloated for us both… Baby, you have no more idea of what Dick is like than, that —Now where do I sign? Oh, I’m sorry.

… Isn’t it funny and lonely being together, Dick. No place to go except close. Shall we just love and love? Ah, but I love the most, and I can tell when you’re away from me, even a little. I think it’s wonderful to be just like everybody else, to reach out and find you all warm beside me in the bed.

… If you will kindly call my husband at the hospital. Yes, the little book is selling everywhere—they want it published in six languages. I was to do the French translation but I’m tired these days—I’m afraid of falling, I’m so heavy and clumsy—like a broken roly-poly that can’t stand up straight. The cold stethoscope against my heart and my strongest feeling “Je m’en fiche de tout.”—Oh, that poor woman in the hospital with the blue baby, much better dead. Isn’t it fine there are three of us now?

… That seems unreasonable, Dick—we have every reason for taking the bigger apartment. Why should we penalize ourselves just because there's more Warren money than Diver money? Oh, thank you, cameriere, but we've changed our minds. This English clergyman tells us that your wine here in Orvieto is excellent. It doesn't travel? That must be why we have never heard of it, because we love wine.

The lakes are sunk in the brown clay and the slopes have all the creases of a belly. The photographer gave us the picture of me, my hair limp over the rail on the boat to Capri. “Good-bye, Blue Grotto,” sang the boatman, “come again soo-oon.” And afterward tracing down the hot sinister shin of the Italian boot with the wind soughing around those eerie castles, the dead watching from up on those hills.

… This ship is nice, with our heels hitting the deck together. This is the blowy corner and each time we turn it I slant forward against the wind and pull my coat together without losing step with Dick. We arc chanting nonsense:

“Oh—oh—oh—oh—
Other flamingoes than me,
Oh—oh—oh—oh—
Other flamingoes than me—

Life is fun with Dick—the people in deck chairs look at us, and a woman is trying to hear what we are singing. Dick is tired of singing it, so go on alone, Dick. You will walk differently alone, dear, through a thicker atmosphere, forcing your way through the shadows of chairs, through the dripping smoke of the funnels. You will feel your own reflection sliding along the eyes of those who look at you. You are no longer insulated; but I suppose you must touch life in order to spring from it.

Sitting on the stanchion of this life-boat I look seaward and let my hair blow and shine. I am motionless against the sky and the boat is made to carry my form onward into the blue obscurity of the future, I am Pallas Athene carved reverently on the front of a galley. The waters are lapping in the public toilets and the agate green foliage of spray changes and complains about the stern.

… We travelled a lot that year—from Woolloomooloo Bay to Biskra. On the edge of the Sahara we ran into a plague of locusts and the chauffeur explained kindly that they were bumble-bees. The sky was low at night, full of the presence of a strange and watchful God. Oh, the poor little naked Ouled Nail; the night was noisy with drums from Senegal and flutes and whining camels, and the natives pattering about in shoes made of old automobile tyres.

But I was gone again by that time—trains and beaches they were all one. That was why he took me travelling, but after my second child, my little girl Topsy, was born everything got dark again.

… If I could get word to my husband who has seen fit to desert me here, to leave me in the hands of incompetents. You tell me my baby is black—that's farcical, that's very cheap. We went to Africa merely to see Timgad, since my principal interest in life is archaeology. I am tired of knowing nothing and being reminded of it all the time.

… When I get well I want to be a fine person like you, Dick—I would study medicine except it's too late. We must spend my money and have a house—I'm tired of apartments and waiting for you. You're bored with Zurich and you can't find time for writing here and you say that it's a confession of weakness for a scientist not to write. And I'll look over the whole field of knowledge and pick out something and really know about it, so I'll have it to hang on to if I go to pieces again. You'll help me, Dick, so I won't feel so guilty. We'll live near a warm beach where we can be brown and young together.

… This is going to be Dick’s work house. Oh, the idea came to us both at the same moment. We had passed Tarmes a dozen times and we rode up here and found the houses empty, except two stables. When we bought we acted through a Frenchman, but the navy sent spies up here in no rime when they found that Americans had bought part of a hill village. They looked for cannons all through the building material, and finally Baby had to twitch wires for us at the Affaires Etrangeres in Paris.

No one comes to the Riviera in summer, so we expect to have a few guests and to work. There are some French people here—Mistinguett last week, surprised to find the hotel open, and Picasso and the man who wrote Pas sur la Bouche.

… Dick, why did you register Mr and Mrs Diver instead of Doctor and Mrs Diver? I just wondered—it just floated through my mind.—You’ve taught me that work is everything and I believe you. You used to say a man knows things and when he stops knowing things he’s like anybody else, and the thing is to get power before he stops knowing things. If you want to turn things topsy-turvy, all right, but must your Nicole follow you walking on her hands, darling?

… Tommy says I am silent. Since I was well the first time I talked a lot to Dick late at night, both of us sitting up in bed and lighting cigarettes, then diving down afterward out of the blue dawn and into the pillows, to keep the light from our eyes. Sometimes I sing, and play with the animals, and I have a few friends too—Mary, for instance. When Mary and I talk neither of us listens to the other. Talk is men. When I talk I say to myself that I am probably Dick. Already I have even been my son, remembering how wise and slow he is. Sometimes I am Doctor Dohmler and one time I may even be an aspect of you, Tommy Barban. Tommy is in love with me, I think, but gently, reassuringly. Enough, though, so that he and Dick have begun to disapprove of each other. All in all, everything has never gone better. I am among friends who like me. I am here on this tranquil beach near my home above the Mediterranean with my husband and two children and our dear friends. Everything is all right—if I can finish translating this damn recipe for chicken a la Maryland into French. My toes feel warm in the sand.” Yes, I’ll look. More new people—oh, that girl—yes. Who lid you say she looked like?… No, I haven’t, we don’t get much chance to see the new American pictures over here. Rosemary who? Well, we’re getting very fashionable for Inly—seems very peculiar to me.“

XI

DOCTOR RICHARD DIVER AND Mrs Elsie Speers sat in the Cafe des Allies in August, under cool and dusty trees. The sparkle of the mica was dulled by the baked ground, and a few gusts of mistral from down the coast seeped through the Esterel and rocked the fishing boats in the harbour, pointing the masts here and there at a featureless sky.

“I had a letter this morning,” said Mrs Speers. “What a terrible time you all must have had with those Negroes! But Rosemary said you were perfectly wonderful to her.”

“Rosemary ought to have a service stripe. It was pretty harrowing—the only person it didn’t disturb was Abe North. He flew off to Havre—he probably doesn’t know about it yet.”

“I’m sorry Mrs Diver was upset,” she said carefully.

Rosemary had written:

“Nicole seemed Out of her Mind. I didn’t want to come South with them because I felt Dick had enough on his hands.”

“She’s all right now.” He spoke almost impatiently, you’re leaving to-morrow.

“When will you sail?”

“Right away.”

“My God, it’s awful to have you go.”

“We’re glad we came here. We’ve had a good time, thanks to you. You’re the first man Rosemary ever cared for.”

Another gust of wind strained around the porphyry hills of la Napoule. There was a hint in the air that the earth was hurrying on toward other weather; the lush midsummer moment outside of time was already over.

“Rosemary’s had crushes, but sooner or later she always turned the man over to me”—Mrs Speers laughed—“for dissection.”

“So I was spared.”

“There was nothing I could have done. She was in love with you before I ever saw you. I told her to go ahead.”

He saw that no provision had been made for him, or for Nicole, in Mrs Speers’ plans—and he saw that her amorality sprang from the conditions of her own withdrawal. It was her right, the pension on which her own emotions had retired. Women are necessarily capable of almost anything in their struggle for survival and can scarcely be convicted of such man-made crimes as “cruelty”. So long as the shuffle of love and pain went on within proper walls Mrs Speers could view it with as much detachment and humour as a eunuch. She had not even allowed for the possibility of Rosemary’s being damaged—or was she certain that she couldn’t be?

“If what you say is true I don’t think it did her any harm.” He was keeping up to the end the pretence that he could still think objectively about Rosemary. “She’s over it already. Still—so many of the important times in life begin by seeming incidental.”

“This wasn’t incidental,” Mrs Speers insisted. “You were the first man—you’re an ideal to her. In every letter she says that.”

“She’s so polite.”

“You and Rosemary are the politest people I’ve ever known, but she means this.”

“My politeness is a trick of the heart.”

This was partly true. From his father Dick had learned the somewhat conscious good manners of the young Southerner coming north after the Civil War. Often he used them and just as often he despised them because they were not a protest against how unpleasant selfishness was, but against how unpleasant it looked.

“I’m in love with Rosemary,” he told her suddenly. “It’s a kind of self-indulgence saying that to you.”

It seemed very strange and official to him, as if the very tables and chairs in the Cafe des Allies would remember it forever. Already he felt her absence from these skies: on the beach he could only remember the sun-torn flesh of her shoulder; at Tarmes he crushed out her footprints as he crossed the garden; and now the orchestra launching into the “Nice Carnival Song”, an echo of last year’s vanished gaieties, started the little dance that went on all about her. In a hundred hours she had come to possess all the world’s dark magic; the blinding belladonna, the caffeine converting physical into nervous energy, the mandragora that imposes harmony.

With an effort he once more accepted the fiction that he shared Mrs Speers’ detachment.

“You and Rosemary aren’t really alike,” he said. “The wisdom she got from you is all moulded up into her persona, into the mask she faces the world with. She doesn’t think; her real depths are Irish and romantic and illogical.”

Mrs Speers knew too that Rosemary, for all her delicate surface, was a young mustang, perceptibly by Captain Doctor Hoyt, U.S.A. Cross-sectioned, Rosemary would have displayed an enormous heart, liver, and soul, all crammed close together under the lovely shell.

Saying good-by, Dick was aware of Elsie Speers’ full charm, aware that she meant rather more to him than merely a last unwillingly relinquished fragment of Rosemary. He could possibly have made up Rosemary; he could never have made up her mother. If the cloak, spurs, and brilliants in which Rosemary had walked off were things with which he had endowed her, it was nice in contrast to watch her mother’s grace, knowing it was surely something he had not evoked. She had an air of seeming to wait, as if for a man to get through with something more important than herself, a battle or an operation, during which he must not be hurried or interfered with. When the man had finished she would be waiting, without fret or impatience somewhere on a high stool, turning the pages of a newspaper.

“Good-bye—and I want you both to remember always how fond of you Nicole and I have grown.”

Back at the Villa Diana, he went to his workroom and opened the shutters, closed against the mid-day glare. On his two long tables, in ordered confusion, lay the materials of his book. Volume I, concerned with Classification, had achieved some success in a small subsidized edition. He was negotiating for its reissue. Volume II was to be a great amplification of his first little book, A Psychology for Psychiatrists. Like so many men he had found that he had only one or two ideas—that his little collection of pamphlets now in its fiftieth German edition contained the germ of all he would ever think or know.

But he was currently uneasy about the whole thing. He resented the wasted years at New Haven, but mostly he felt a discrepancy between the growing luxury in which the Divers lived and the need for display that apparently went along with it. Remembering his Rumanian friend’s story, about the man who had worked for years on the brain of an armadillo, he suspected that patient Germans were sitting close to the libraries of Berlin and Vienna callously anticipating him. He had about decided to brief the work in its present condition and publish it in an undocumented volume of a hundred thousand words as an introduction to more scholarly volumes to follow.

He confirmed this decision walking around the rays of late afternoon in his workroom. With the new plan he could be through by spring. It seemed to him that when a man with his energy was pursued for a year by increasing doubts, it indicated some fault in the plan.

He laid the bars of gilded metal that he used as paperweights along the sheaves of notes. He swept up, for no servant was allowed in here, treated his washroom sketchily with Bon Ami, repaired a screen, and sent off an order to a publishing house in Zurich. Then he drank an ounce of gin with twice as much water.

He saw Nicole in the garden. Presently he must encounter her and the prospect gave him a leaden feeling. Before her he must keep up a perfect front, now and to-morrow, next week and next year. All night in Paris he had held her in his arms while she slept light under the luminol; in the early morning he broke in upon her confusion before it could form, with words of tenderness and protection, and she slept again with his face against the warm scent of her hair. Before she woke he had arranged everything at the phone in the next room. Rosemary was to move to another hotel. She was to be Daddy’s Girl and even to give up saying goodbye to them. The proprietor of the hotel, Mr McBeth, was to be the three Chinese monkeys. Packing amid the piled boxes and tissue paper of many purchases, Dick and Nicole left for the Riviera at noon.

Then there was a reaction. As they settled down in the wagon-lit Dick saw that Nicole was waiting for it, and it came quickly and desperately, before the train was out of the Ceinture—his only instinct was to step off while the train was going slow, rush back and see where Rosemary was, what she was doing. He opened a book and bent his pince-nez upon it, aware that Nicole was watching him from her pillow across the compartment. Unable to read, he pretended to be tired and shut his eyes, but she was still watching him and, though still she was half asleep from the hangover of the drug, she was relieved and almost happy that he was hers again.

It was worse with his eyes shut, for it gave a rhythm of finding and losing, finding and losing; but so as not to appear restless he lay like that until noon. At luncheon things were better—it was always a fine meal; a thousand lunches in inns and restaurants, wagon-lits, and airplanes were a mighty collation to have taken together. The familiar hurry of the train waiters, the little bottles of wine and mineral water, the excellent food of the Paris—Lyon—Mediterranee gave them the illusion that everything was the same as before, but it was almost the first trip he had ever taken with Nicole that was a going away rather than a going toward. He drank a whole bottle of wine save for Nicole’s single glass; they talked about the house and the children. But once back in the compartment a silence fell over them like the silence in the restaurant across from the Luxembourg. Receding from a grief, it seems necessary to retrace the same steps that brought us there. An unfamiliar impatience settled on Dick; suddenly Nicole said:

“It seemed too bad to leave Rosemary like that—do you suppose she’ll be all right?”

“Of course. She could take care of herself anywhere—” Lest this belittle Nicole’s ability to do likewise, he added, “After all, she’s an actress, and even though her mother’s in the background she has to look out for herself.”

“She’s very attractive.”

“She’s an infant.”

“She’s attractive, though.”

They talked aimlessly back and forth, each speaking for the other.

“She’s not as intelligent as I thought,” Dick offered.

“She’s quite smart.”

“Not very, though—there’s a persistent aroma of the nursery.”

“She’s very—very pretty,” Nicole said in a detached, emphatic way, “and I thought she was very good in the picture.”

“She was well directed. Thinking it over, it wasn’t very individual.”

“I thought it was. I can see how she’d be very attractive to men.”

His heart twisted. To what men? How many men?

—Do you mind if I pull down the curtain?

—Please do, it’s too light in here.

Where now? And with whom?

“In a few years she’ll look ten years older than you.”

“On the contrary. I sketched her one night on a theatre programme, I think she’ll last.”

They were both restless in the night. In a day or two Dick would try to banish the ghost of Rosemary before it became walled up with them, but for the moment he had no force to do it. Sometimes it is harder to deprive oneself of a pain than of a pleasure, and the memory so possessed him that for the moment there was nothing to do but to pretend. This was more difficult because he was currently annoyed with Nicole, who, after all these years, should recognize symptoms of strain in herself and guard against them. Twice within a fortnight she had broken up: there had been the night of the dinner at Tarmes, when he had found her in her bedroom dissolved in crazy laughter telling Mrs McKisco she could not go into the bathroom because the key was thrown down the well. Mrs McKisco was astonished and resentful, baffled and yet in a way comprehending. Dick had not been particularly alarmed then, for afterward Nicole was repentant. She called at Gausse’s hotel but the McKiscos were gone.

The collapse in Paris was another matter, adding significance to the first one. It prophesied possibly a new cycle, a new pousse of the malady. Having gone through unprofessional agonies during her long relapse following the birth of Topsy, their second child, he had hardened himself about her, making a cleavage between Nicole sick and Nicole well. This made it difficult now to distinguish between his self-protective professional detachment and some new coldness in his heart. As an indifference cherished, or left to atrophy, becomes an emptiness, to this extent he had learned to become empty of Nicole, serving her against his will with negations and emotional neglect. One writes of scars healed, a loose parallel to the pathology of the skin, but there is no such thing in the life of an individual. There are open wounds, shrunk sometimes to the size of a pin-prick, but wounds still. The marks of suffering are more comparable to the loss of a finger, or of the sight of an eye. We may not miss them, either, for one minute in a year, but if we should there is nothing to be done about it.

XII

HE FOUND NICOLE IN the garden with her arms folded high on her shoulders. She looked at him with straight grey eyes, with a child’s searching wonder.

“I went to Cannes,” he said. “I ran into Mrs Speers. She’s leaving to-morrow. She wanted to come up and say goodbye to you, but I slew the idea.”

“I’m sorry. I’d like to have seen her. I like her.”

“Who else do you think I saw—Bartholomew Tailor.”

“You didn’t.”

“I couldn’t have missed that face of his, the old experienced weasel. He was looking over the ground for Ciro’s menagerie—they’ll all be down next year. I suspected Mrs Abrams was a sort of outpost.”

“And Baby was outraged the first summer we came here.”

“They don’t really give a damn where they are, so I don’t see why they don’t stay and freeze in Deauville.”

“Can’t we start rumours about cholera or something?”

“I told Bartholomew that some categories died off like flies here—I told him the life of a suck was as short as the life of a machine-gunner in the war.”

“You didn’t.”

“No, I didn’t,” he admitted. “He was very pleasant. It was a beautiful sight, he and I shaking hands there on the boulevard. The meeting of Sigmund Freud and Ward McAllister.”

Dick didn’t want to talk—he wanted to be alone so that his thoughts about work and the future would overpower his thoughts of love and to-day. Nicole knew about it but only darkly and tragically, hating him a little in an animal way, yet wanting to rub against his shoulder.

“The darling,” Dick said lightly.

He went into the house, forgetting something he wanted to do there, and then remembering it was the piano. He sat down whistling and played by ear:

“Just picture you upon my knee
With tea for two and two for tea
And me for you and you for me—”

Through the melody flowed a sudden realization that Nicole, hearing it, would guess quickly at a nostalgia for the past fortnight. He broke off with a casual chord and left the piano.

It was hard to know where to go. He glanced about the house that Nicole had made, that Nicole’s grandfather had paid for. He owned only his work house and the ground on which it stood. Out of three thousand a year and what dribbled in from his publications he paid for his clothes and personal expenses, for cellar charges, and for Lanier’s education, so far confined to a nurse’s wage. Never had a move been contemplated without Dick’s figuring his share. Living rather ascetically, travelling third-class when he was alone, with the cheapest wine, and good care of his clothes, and penalizing himself for any extravagances, he maintained a qualified financial independence. After a certain point, though, it was difficult—again and again it was necessary to decide together as to the uses to which Nicole’s money should be put. Naturally Nicole, wanting to own him, wanting him to stand still for ever, encouraged any slackness on his part, and in multiplying ways he was constantly inundated by a trickling of goods and money. The inception of the idea of the cliff villa, which they had elaborated as a fantasy one day, was a typical example of the forces divorcing them from the first simple arrangements in Zurich.

“Wouldn’t it be fun if—?” it had been; and then, “Won’t it be fun when —?”

It was not so much fun. His work became confused with Nicole’s problems; in addition, her income had increased so fast of late that it seemed to belittle his work. Also, for the purpose of her cure, he had for many years pretended to a rigid domesticity from which he was drifting away, and the pretence became more arduous in this effortless immobility, in which he was inevitably subjected to microscopic examination. When Dick could no longer play what he wanted to play on the piano, it was an indication that life was being refined down to a point. He stayed in the big room a long time, listening to the buzz of the electric clock, listening to time.

In November the waves grew black and dashed over the sea wall on to the shore road, such summer life as had survived disappeared, and the beaches were melancholy and desolate under the mistral and rain. Gausse’s hotel was closed for repairs and enlargement and the scaffolding of the summer casino at Juan les Pins grew larger and more formidable. Going into Cannes or Nice, Dick and Nicole met new people—members of orchestras, restaurateurs, horticultural enthusiasts, shipbuilders—for Dick had bought an old dinghy—and members of the Syndicat d’Initiative. They knew their servants well and gave thought to the children’s education. In December Nicole seemed well-knit again; when a month had passed without tension, without the tight mouth, the unmotivated smile, the unfathomable remark, they went to the Swiss Alps for the Christmas holidays.

XIII

With his cap, Dick slapped the snow from his dark blue ski-suit before going inside. The great hall, its floor pockmarked by two decades of hobnails, was cleared for the tea dance and four-score young Americans, domiciled in schools near Gstaad, bounced about to the frolic of “Don’t Bring Lulu,” or exploded violently with the first percussions of the Charleston. It was a colony of the young, simple, and expensive—the Sturmtruppen of the rich were at St Moritz. Baby Warren felt that she had made a gesture of renunciation in joining the Divers here.

Dick picked out the two sisters easily across the delicately haunted, soft-swaying room—they were poster-like, formidable in their snow costumes, Nicole’s of cerulean blue, Baby’s of brick red. The young Englishman was talking to them; but they were paying no attention, lulled to the staring point by the adolescent dance.

Nicole’s snow-warm face lighted up further as she saw Dick. “Where is he?”

“He missed the train—I’m meeting him later,” Dick sat down, swinging a heavy boot over his knee. “You two look very striking together. Every once in a while I forget we’re in the same party and get a big shock at seeing you.”

Baby was a tall, fine-looking woman, deeply engaged in being just over thirty. Symptomatically she had pulled two men with her from London, one scarcely down from Cambridge, one old and hard with Victorian lecheries. Baby had certain spinster’s characteristics—she was alien from touch, she started if she was touched suddenly, and such lingering touches as kisses and embraces slipped directly through the flesh into the forefront of her consciousness. She made few gestures with her trunk, her body proper—instead, she stamped her foot and tossed her head in almost an old-fashioned way. She relished the foretaste of death, prefigured by the catastrophes of friends; persistently she clung to the idea of Nicole’s tragic destiny.

Baby’s younger Englishman had been chaperoning the women down appropriate inclines and harrowing them on the bob-run. Dick, having turned an ankle in a too ambitious telemark, loafed gratefully about the nursery slope with the children or drank kvass with a Russian doctor at the hotel.

“Please be happy, Dick,” Nicole urged him. “Why don’t you meet some of these ickle durls and dance with them in the afternoon?”

“What would I say to them?”

Her low, almost harsh voice rose a few notes, simulating a plaintive coquetry: “Say, ‘Ickle durl, oo is de pwettiest sing.’ What do you think you say?”

“I don’t like ickle durls. They smell of castile soap and peppermint. When I dance with them, I feel as if I’m pushing a baby carriage.”

It was a dangerous subject—he was careful, to the point of self-consciousness, to stare far over the heads of young maidens.

“There’s a lot of business,” said Baby. “First place, there’s news from home—the property we used to call the station property. The railroads only bought the centre of it at first. Now they’ve bought the rest, and it belonged to Mother. It’s a question of investing the money.”

Pretending to be repelled by this gross turn in the conversation, the Englishman made for a girl on the floor. Following him for an instant with the uncertain eyes of an American girl in the grip of a lifelong Anglophilia, Baby continued defiantly:

“It’s a lot of money. It’s three hundred thousand apiece. I keep an eye on my own investments, but Nicole doesn't know anything about securities, and I don't suppose you do either."

"I've got to meet the train," Dick said evasively.

Outside he inhaled damp snowflakcs that he could no longer see against the darkening sky. Three children sledding past shouted a warning in some strange language ; he heard them yell at the next bend and a little farther on he heard sleigh-bells coming up the hill in the dark. The holiday station glittered with expectancy, boys and girls waiting for new boys and girls, and by the time the train arrived Dick had caught the rhythm and pretended to Franz Gregorovius that he was clipping off a half-hour from an endless roll of pleasures. But Franz had some intensity of purpose at the moment that fought through any superimposition of mood on Dick's part. "I may get up to Zurich for a day," Dick had written, "or you can manage to come to Lausanne." Franz had managed to come all the way to Gstaad.

He was forty. Upon his healthy maturity reposed a set of pleasant official manners, but he was most at home in a somewhat stuffy safety from which he could despise the broken rich whom he re-educated. His scientific heredity might have bequeathed him a wider world, but he seemed to have deliberately chosen the standpoint of a humbler class, a choice typified by his selection of a wife. At the hotel Baby Warren made a quick examination of him and, failing find any of the hall-marks she respected, the subtler virtues or courtesies by which the privileged classes recognized one another, treated him thereafter with her second manner. Nicole was always a little afraid of him. Dick liked him, as he liked his friends, without reservations.

For the evening they were sliding down the hill into the village, on those little sleds which serve the same purpose as gondolas do in Venice. Their destination was a hotel with an old-fashioned Swiss tap-room, wooden and resounding, a room of clocks, kegs, steins, and antlers. Many parties at long tables blurred into one great party and ate fondue—a peculiarly indigestible form of Welsh rarebit, mitigated by hot spiced wine.

It was jolly in the big room; the younger Englishman remarked it and Dick conceded that there was no other word. With the pert heady wine he relaxed and pretended that the world was all put together again by the grey-haired men of the golden nineties who shouted old glees at the piano, by the young voices and the bright costumes toned into the room by the swirling smoke. For a moment he felt that they were in a ship with landfall just ahead ; in the faces of all the girls was the same innocent expectation of the possibilities inherent in the situation and the night. He looked to see if that special girl was there and got an impression that she was at the table behind them—then he forgot her and invented a rigmarole and tried to make his party have a good time.

"I must talk to you," said Franz in English. "I have only two days to spend here."

"I suspected you had something on your mind."

"I have a plan that is—so marvellous." His hand fell upon Dick's knee. "I have a plan that will be the making of us two."

"Well?"

"Dick—there is a clinic we could have together—the old clinic of Braun on the Zugersee. The plant is all modern except for a few points. He is sick—he wants to go up in Austria, to die probably. It is a chance that is just insuperable. You and me—what a pair! Now don't say anything yet until I finish."

From the yellow glint in Baby's eyes, Dick saw she was listening.

"We must undertake it together. It would not bind you too tight—it would give you a base, a laboratory, a centre. You could stay in residence say no more than half the year, when the weather is fine. In winter you could go to France or America and write your texts fresh from clinical experience.” He lowered his voice. “And for the convalescence in your family, there are the atmosphere and regularity of the clinic at hand.” Dick’s expression did not encourage this note, so Franz dropped it with the punctuation of his tongue leaving his lip quickly. “We could be partners, I the executive manager, you the theoretician, the brilliant consultant and all that. I know myself—I know I have no genius and you have. But, in my way, I am thought very capable ; I am utterly competent at the most modern clinical methods. Sometimes for months I have served as the practical head of the old clinic. The professor says this plan is excellent, he advises me to go ahead. He says he is going to live for ever and work up to the last minute.”

Dick formed imaginary pictures of the prospect as a preliminary to any exercise of judgement.

“What’s the financial angle?” he asked.

Franz threw up his chin, his eyebrows, the transient wrinkles of his forehead, his hands, his elbows, his shoulders ; he strained up the muscles of his legs, so that the cloth of his trousers bulged, pushed up his heart into his throat and his voice into the roof of his mouth.

“There we have it! Money!” he bewailed. “I have little money. The price in American money is two hundred thousand dollars. The innovation—ary—” he tasted the coinage doubtfully,“—steps that you will agree are necessary will cost twenty thousand dollars American. But the clinic is a gold mine—I tell you, I have seen the books. For an investment of two hundred and twenty thousand dollars we have an assured income of—”

Baby’s curiosity was such that Dick brought her into the conversation.

“In your experience, Baby,” he demanded, “have you found that when a European wants to see an American very pressingly it is invariably something concerned with money?”

“What is it?” she said innocently.

“This young Privat-dozent thinks that he and I ought to launch into big business and try to attract nervous breakdowns from America.”

Worried, Franz stared at Baby as Dick continued:

“But who are we, Franz? You bear a big name and I’ve written two textbooks. Is that enough to attract anybody? And I haven’t got that much money—I haven’t got a tenth of it.” Franz smiled cynically. “Honestly I haven’t. Nicole and Baby are rich as Croesus, but I haven’t managed to get my hands on any of it yet.”

They were all listening now—Dick wondered if the girl at the table behind was listening too. The idea attracted him. He decided to let Baby speak for him, as one often lets women raise their voices over issues that are not in their hands. Baby became suddenly her grandfather, cool and experimental.

“I think it’s a suggestion you ought to consider, Dick. I don’t know what Doctor Gregory was saying—but it seems to me —”

Behind him the girl had leaned forward into a smoke ring and was picking up something from the floor. Nicole’s face fitted into his own across the table—her beauty, tentatively nesting and posing, flowed into his love, ever braced to protect it.

“Consider it, Dick,” Franz urged excitedly. “When one writes on psychiatry, one should have actual clinical contacts. Jung writes, Bleuler writes, Freud writes, Forel writes, Adler writes—also they are in constant contact with mental disorder.”

“Dick has me,” laughed Nicole. “I should think that’d be enough mental disorder for one man.”

“That’s different,” said Franz cautiously.

Baby was thinking that if Nicole lived beside a clinic she would always feel quite safe about her.

“We must think it over carefully,” she said.

Though amused at her insolence, Dick did not encourage it.

“The decision concerns me, Baby,” he said gently. “It’s nice of you to want to buy me a clinic.”

Realizing she had meddled, Baby withdrew hurriedly:

“Of course, it’s entirely your affair.”

“A thing as important as this will take weeks to decide. I wonder how I like the picture of Nicole and me anchored to Zurich—” He turned to Franz, anticipating, “—I know. Zurich has a gas-house and running water and electric light—I lived there three years.”

“I will leave you to think it over,” said Franz. “I am confident—”

One hundred pairs of five-pound boots had begun to clump toward the door, and they joined the press. Outside in the crisp moonlight, Dick saw the girl tying her sled to one of the sleighs ahead. They piled into their own sleigh and at the crisp-cracking whips the horses strained, breasting the dark air. Past them figures ran and scrambled, the younger ones shoving each other from sleds and runners, landing in the soft snow, then panting after the horses to drop exhausted on a sled or wail that they were abandoned. On either side the fields were beneficently tranquil; the space through which the cavalcade moved was high and limitless. In the country there was less noise, as though they were all listening atavistically for wolves in the side snow.

In Saanen they poured into the municipal dance, crowded with cow herders, hotel servants, shopkeepers, ski teachers, guides, tourists, peasants. To come into the warm enclosed place after the pantheistic animal feeling without was to re-assume some absurd and impressive knightly name, as thunderous as spurred boots in war, as football cleats on the cement of a locker-room floor. There was conventional yodelling, and the familiar rhythm of it separated Dick from what he had first found romantic in the scene. At first he thought it was because he had hounded the girl out of his consciousness; then it came to him under the form of what Baby had said: “We must think it over carefully—” and the unsaid lines back of that: “We own you, and you’ll admit it sooner or later. It is absurd to keep up the pretence of independence.”

It had been years since Dick had bottled up malice against creature—since freshman year at New Haven, when he come upon a popular essay about “mental hygiene”. he lost his temper at Baby and simultaneously tried to coop it up within him, resenting her cold rich insolence. It would be hundreds of years before any emergent Amazons would ever grasp the fact that a man is vulnerable only in his pride, but delicate as Humpty Dumpty once that is meddled with—? though some of them paid the fact a cautious lip-service. Doctor Diver’s profession of sorting the broken shells of another sort of egg had given him a dread of breakage. But:

“There’s too much good manners,” he said on the way back to Gstaad in the smooth sleigh.

“Well, I think that’s nice,” said Baby.

“No, it isn’t,” he insisted to the anonymous bundle of fur. “Good manners are an admission that everybody is so tender that they have to be handled with gloves. Now, human respect—you don’t call a man a coward or a liar lightly, but if you spend your life sparing people’s feelings and feeding their vanity, you get so you can’t distinguish what should be respected in them.”

“I think Americans take their manners rather seriously,” said the elder Englishman.

“I guess so,” said Dick. “My father had the kind of manners he inherited from the days when you shot first and apologized afterward. Men armed—why, you Europeans haven’t carried arms in civil life since the beginning of the eighteenth century—”

“Not actually, perhaps —”

“Not actually. Not really.”

“Dick, you’ve always had such beautiful manners,” said Baby conciliatingly.

The women were regarding him across the zoo of robes with some alarm. The younger Englishman did not understand—he was one of the kind who were always jumping around cornices and balconies, as if they thought they were in the rigging of a ship—and filled the ride to the hotel with a preposterous story about a boxing match with his best friend, in which they loved and bruised each other for an hour, always with great reserve. Dick became facetious.

“So every time he hit you, you considered him an even better friend?”

“I respected him more.”

“It’s the premise I don’t understand. You and your best friend scrap about a trivial matter—”

“If you don’t understand, I can’t explain it to you,” said the young Englishman coldly.

“—This is what I’ll get if I begin saying what I think,” Dick said to himself.

He was ashamed at baiting the man, realizing that the absurdity of the story rested in the immaturity of the attitude combined with the sophisticated method of its narration.

The carnival spirit was strong and they went with the crowd into the grill, where a Tunisian barman manipulated the illumination in a counterpoint, whose other melody was the moon off the ice rink staring in the big windows. In that light, Dick found the girl devitalized and uninteresting. He turned from her to enjoy the darkness, the cigarette points going green and silver when the lights shone red, the band of white that fell across the dancers as the door to the bar was opened and closed.

“Now tell me, Franz,” he demanded, “do you think after sitting up all night drinking beer, you can go back and convince your patients that you have any character? Don’t you think they’ll see you’re a gastropath?”

“I’m going to bed,” Nicole announced. Dick accompanied her to the door of the elevator.

“I’d come with you, but I must show Franz that I’m not intended for a clinician.”

Nicole walked into the elevator.

“Baby has lots of common sense,” she said meditatively.

“Baby is one of—”

The door slashed shut. Facing a mechanical hum, Dick finished the sentence in his mind, “—Baby is a trivial, selfish woman.”

But two days later, sleighing to the station with Franz, Dick admitted that he thought favourably upon the matter.

“We’re beginning to turn in a circle,” he admitted. “Living on this scale, there’s an unavoidable series of strains, and Nicole doesn’t survive them. The pastoral quality down on the summer Riviera is all changing anyhow—next year they’ll have a Season.”

They passed the crisp green rinks where Wiener waltzes blared and the colours of many mountain schools flashed against the pale-blue skies.

“—I hope we’ll be able to do it, Franz. There’s nobody I’d rather try it with than you —”

Good-bye, Gstaad! Good-bye, fresh faces, cold sweet flowers, flakes in the darkness. Good-bye, Gstaad, good-bye!

XIV

Dick awoke at five after a Jong dream of war, walked to the window and stared out at the Zugersee. His dream had begun in sombre majesty; navy-blue uniforms crossed a dark plaza behind bands playing the second movement of Prokofiev’s Love of Three Oranges. Presently there were fire engines, symbols of disaster, and a ghastly uprising of the mutilated in a dressing station. He turned on his bed lamp and made a thorough note of it, ending with the half-ironic phrase: “Non-combatant’s shell-shock.”

As he sat on the side of his bed he felt the room, the house, and the night as empty. In the next room Nicole muttered something desolate and he felt sorry for whatever loneliness she was feeling in her sleep. For him time stood still and then every few years accelerated in a rush, like the quick rewind of a film, but for Nicole the years slipped away by clock and calendar and birthday, with the added poignance of her perishable beauty.

Even this past year and a half on the Zugersee seemed wasted time for her, the seasons marked only by the workmen on the road turning pink in May, brown in July, black in September, white again in Spring. She had come out of her first illness alive with new hopes, expecting so much, yet deprived of any subsistence except Dick, bringing up children she could only pretend gently to love, guided orphans. The people she liked, rebels mostly, disturbed her and were bad for her—she sought in them the vitality that had made them independent or creative or rugged, sought in vain—for their secrets were buried deep in childhood struggles they had forgotten. They were more interested in Nicole’s exterior harmony and charm, the other face of her illness. She led a lonely life owning Dick, who did not want to be owned.

Many times he had tried unsuccessfully to let go his hold on her. They had many fine times together, fine talks between the loves of the white nights, but always when he turned away from her into himself he left her holding Nothing in her hands and staring at it, calling it many names, but knowing it was only the hope that he would come back soon.

He scrunched his pillow hard, lay down, and put the back of his neck against it as a Japanese does to slow the circulation, and slept again for a time. Later, while he shaved, Nicole awoke and marched around, giving abrupt, succinct orders to children and servants. Lanier came in to watch his father shave—living beside a psychiatric clinic he had developed an extraordinary confidence in and admiration for his father, together with an exaggerated indifference toward most other adults ; the patients appeared to him either in their odd aspects, or else as devitalized, over-correct creatures without personality. He was a handsome, promising boy and Dick devoted much time to him, in the relationship of a sympathetic but exacting officer and a respectful enlisted man.

“Why,” Lanier asked, “do you always leave a little lather on the top of your hair when you shave?”

Cautiously Dick parted soapy lips: “I have never been able to find out. I’ve often wondered. I think it’s because I get the first finger soapy when I make the line of my side-burn, but how it gets up on top of my head I don’t know.”

“I’m going to watch it all to-morrow.”

“That’s your only question before breakfast.”

“I don’t really call it a question.”

“That’s one on you.”

Half an hour later Dick started up to the administration building. He was thirty-seven—still declining a beard he yet had a more medical aura about him than he had worn upon the Riviera. For eighteen months now he had lived at the clinic, certainly one of the best-appointed in Europe. Like Dohmler’s it was of the modern type—no longer a single dark and sinister building, but a small, scattered, yet deceitfully integrated village. Dick and Nicole had added much in the domain of taste, so that the plant was a thing of beauty, visited by every psychologist passing through Zurich. With the addition of a caddy house it might very well have been a country club. The Eglantine and the Beeches, houses for those sunk into eternal darkness, were screened by little copses from the main building, camouflaged strong-points. Behind was a large truck farm, worked partly by the patients. The workshops for ego-therapy were three, placed under a single roof, and there Doctor Diver began his morning’s inspection. The carpentry shop, full of sunlight, exuded the sweetness of sawdust, of a lost age of wood; always half a dozen men were there, hammering, planing, buzzing—silent men, who lifted solemn eyes from their work as he passed through. Himself a good carpenter, he discussed with them the efficiency of some tools for a moment in a quiet, personal, interested voice. Adjoining was the book-bindery, adapted to the most mobile patients, who were not always, however, those who had the greatest chance for recovery. The last chamber was devoted to bead-work, weaving, and work in brass. The faces of the patients here wore the expression of one who has just sighed profoundly, dismissing something insoluble—but their sighs only marked the beginning of another ceaseless round of ratiocination, not in a line as with normal people but in the same circle. Round, round, and round. Around for ever. But the bright colours of the stuffs they worked with gave strangers a momentary illusion that all was well, as in a kindergarten. These patients brightened as Doctor Diver came in. Most of them liked him better than they liked Doctor Gregorovius. Those who had once lived in the great world invariably liked him better. There were a few who thought he neglected them, or that he was not simple, or that he posed. Their responses were not dissimilar to those that Dick evoked in non-professional life, but here they were warped and distorted.

One Englishwoman spoke to him always about a subject which she considered her own.

“Have we got music to-night?”

“I don’t know,” he answered. “I haven’t seen Doctor Lladislau. How did you enjoy the music that Mrs Sachs and Mr Longstreet gave us last night?”

“It was so-so.”

“I thought it was fine—especially the Chopin.”

“I thought it was so-so.”

“When are you going to play for us yourself?”

She shrugged her shoulders, as pleased at this question as she had been for several years.

“Some time. But I only play so-so.”

They knew that she did not play at all—she had had two sisters who were brilliant musicians, but she had never been able to learn the notes when they had been young together.

From the workshops Dick went to visit the Eglantine and the Beeches. Exteriorly these houses were as cheerful as the others; Nicole had designed the decoration and the furniture on a necessary base of concealed grilles and bars and immovable furniture. She had worked with so much imagination—the inventive quality, which she lacked, being supplied by the problem itself—that no instructed visitor would have dreamed that the light, graceful filigree work at a window was a strong, unyielding end of a tether, that the pieces reflecting modern tubular tendencies were stauncher than the massive creations of the Edwardians—even the flowers lay in iron fingers and every casual ornament and fixture was as necessary as a girder in a skyscraper. Her tireless eyes had made each room yield up its greatest usefulness. Complimented, she referred to herself brusquely as a master plumber.

For those whose compasses were not depolarized there seemed many odd things in these houses. Doctor Diver was often amused in the Eglantine, the men’s building—here there was a strange little exhibitionist who thought that if he could walk unclothed and unmolested from the Etoile to the Place de la Concorde he would solve many things—and, perhaps, Dick thought, he was quite right.

His most interesting case was in the main building. The patient was a woman of thirty who had been in the clinic six months; she was an American painter who had lived long in Paris. They had no very satisfactory history of her. A cousin had happened upon her all mad and gone, and after an unsatisfactory interlude at one of the whoopee cures that fringed the city, dedicated largely to tourist victims of drug and drink, he had managed to get her to Switzerland. On her admittance she had been exceptionally pretty—now she was a living, agonizing sore. All blood tests had failed to give a positive reaction and the trouble was unsatisfactorily catalogued as nervous eczema. For two months she had lain under it, as if imprisoned in the Iron Maiden. She was coherent, even brilliant, within the limits of her special hallucinations.

She was particularly his patient. During spells of over-excitement he was the only doctor who could “do anything with her.” Several weeks ago, on one of many nights that she had passed in sleepless torture, Franz had succeeded in hypnotizing her into a few hours of needed rest, but he had never again succeeded. Hypnosis was a tool that Dick distrusted and seldom used, for he knew that he could not always summon up the mood in himself—he had once tried it on Nicole and she had scornfully laughed at him.

The woman in Room Twenty could not see him when he came in—the area about her eyes was too tightly swollen. She spoke in a strong, rich, deep, thrilling voice.

“How long will this last? Is it going to be for ever?”

“It’s not going to be very long now. Doctor Lladislau tells me there are whole areas cleared up.”

“If I knew what I had done to deserve this I could accept it with equanimity.”

“It isn’t wise to be mystical about it—we recognize it as a nervous phenomenon. It’s related to the blush—when you were a girl, did you blush easily?”

She lay with her face turned to the ceiling.

“I have found nothing to blush for since I cut my wisdom teeth.”

“Haven’t you committed your share of petty sins and mistakes?”

“I have nothing to reproach myself with.”

“You’re very fortunate.”

The woman thought a moment; her voice came up through her bandaged face afflicted with subterranean melodies:

“I’m sharing the fate of the women of my time who challenged men to battle.”

“To your vast surprise it was just like all battles,” he answered, adopting her formal diction.

“Just like all battles.” She thought this over. “You pick a set-up, or else win a Pyrrhic victory, or you’re wrecked and ruined—you’re a ghostly echo from a broken wall.”

“You are neither wrecked nor ruined,” he told her. “Are you quite sure you’ve been in a real battle?”

“Look at me!” she cried furiously.

“You’ve suffered, but many women suffered before they mistook themselves for men.” It was becoming an argument and he retreated. “In any case you mustn’t confuse a single failure with a final defeat.”

She sneered, “Beautiful words,” and the phrase transpiring up through the crust of pain humbled him.

“We would like to go into the true reasons that brought you here—” he began, but she interrupted.

“I am here as a symbol of something. I thought perhaps you would know what it was.”

“You are sick,” he said mechanically.

“Then what was it I had almost found?”

“A greater sickness.”

“That’s all?”

“That’s all.” With disgust he heard himself lying, but here and now the vastness of the subject could only be compressed into a lie. “Outside of that there’s only confusion and chaos. I won’t lecture to you—we have too acute a realization of your physical suffering. But it’s only by meeting the problems of every day, no matter how trifling and boring they seem, that you can make things drop back into place again. After that—perhaps you’ll be able again to examine —”

He had slowed up to avoid the inevitable end of his thought: “—the frontiers of consciousness.” The frontiers that artists must explore were not for her, ever. She was fine-spun, inbred—eventually she might find rest in some quiet mysticism. Exploration was for those with a measure of peasant blood, those with big thighs and thick ankles who could take punishment as they took bread and salt, on every inch of flesh and spirit.

—Not for you, he almost said. It’s too tough a game for you.

Yet in the awful majesty of her pain he went out to her unreservedly, almost sexually. He wanted to gather her up in his arms, as he so often had Nicole, and cherish even her mistakes, so deeply were they part of her. The orange light through the drawn blind, the sarcophagus of her figure on the bed, the spot of face, the voice searching the vacuity of her illness and finding only remote abstractions.

As he arose the tears fled lava-like into her bandages.

“That is for something,” she whispered. “Something must come out of it.”

He stooped and kissed her forehead.

“We must all try to be good,” he said.

Leaving her room he sent the nurse in to her. There were other patients to see: an American girl of fifteen who had been brought up on the basis that childhood was intended to be all fun—his visit was provoked by the fact that she had just hacked off all her hair with nail scissors. There was nothing much to be done for her—a family history of neurosis and nothing stable in her past to build on. The father, normal and conscientious himself, had tried to protect a nervous brood from life’s troubles and had succeeded merely in preventing them from developing powers of adjustment to life’s inevitable surprises. There was little that Dick could say: “Helen, when you’re in doubt you must ask a nurse, you must learn to take advice. Promise me you will.”

What was a promise with the head sick? He looked in upon a frail exile from the Caucasus buckled securely in a sort of hammock, which in turn was submerged in a warm medical bath, and upon the three daughters of a Portuguese general who slid almost imperceptibly toward paresis. He went into the room next to them and told a collapsed psychiatrist that he was better, always better, and the man tried to read his face for conviction, since he hung on the real world only through such reassurance as he could find in the resonance, or lack of it, in Doctor Diver’s voice. After that Dick discharged a shiftless orderly and by then it was the lunch hour.

XV

MEALS WITH THE PATIENTS were a chore he approached with apathy. The gathering, which of course did not include residents at the Eglantine or the Beeches, was conventional enough at first sight, but over it brooded always a heavy melancholy. Such doctors as were present kept up a conversation, but most of the patients, as if exhausted by their morning’s endeavour or depressed by the company, spoke little and ate looking into their plates.

Luncheon over, Dick returned to his villa. Nicole was in the salon wearing a strange expression.

“Read that,” she said.

He opened the letter. It was from a woman recently discharged, though with scepticism on the part of the faculty. It accused him in no uncertain terms of having seduced her daughter, who had been at her mother’s side during the crucial stage of the illness. It presumed that Mrs Diver would be glad to have this information and learn what her husband was “really like”.

Dick read the letter again. Though it was couched in clear and concise English he recognized it as the letter of a maniac. Upon a single occasion he had let the girl, a flirtatious little brunette, ride into Zurich with him, at her request, and in the evening had brought her back to the clinic. In an idle, almost indulgent way, he kissed her. Later, she tried to carry the affair further, but he was not interested and subsequently, probably consequently, the girl had come to dislike him, and had taken her mother away.

“This letter is deranged,” he said. “I had no relations of any kind with that girl. I didn’t even like her.”

“Yes, I’ve tried thinking that,” said Nicole.

“Surely you don’t believe it?”

“I’ve been sitting here.”

He sank his voice to a reproachful note and sat beside her.

“This is absurd. This is a letter from a mental patient.”

“I was a mental patient.”

He stood up and spoke more authoritatively.

“Suppose we don’t have any nonsense, Nicole. Go and round up the children and we’ll start.”

In the car, with Dick driving, they followed the little promontories of the lake, catching the burn of light and water in the wind-shield, tunnelling through cascades of evergreen. It was Dick’s car, a Renault so dwarfish that they all stuck out of it except the children, between whom Mademoiselle towered mast-like in the rear seat. They knew every kilometre of the road—where they would smell the pine needles and the black stove smoke. A high sun with a face raced on it beat fierce on the straw hats of the children.

Nicole was silent; Dick was uneasy at her straight hard gaze. Often he felt lonely with her, and frequently she tired him with the short floods of personal revelations that she reserved exclusively for him, “I’m like this—I’m more like that,” but this afternoon he would have been glad had she rattled on in staccato for a while and given him glimpses of 1er thoughts. The situation was always most threatening when she backed up into herself and closed the doors behind her.

At Zug Mademoiselle got out and left them. The Divers approached the Agiri Fair through a menagerie of mammoth steam-rollers that made way for them. Dick parked the car and, as Nicole looked at him without moving, he said: “Come on, darl.” Her lips drew apart into a sudden awful smile and his belly quailed, but as if he hadn’t seen it he repeated: “Come on. So the children can get out.”

“Oh, I’ll come all right,” she answered, tearing the words from some story spinning itself out inside her, too fast for him to grasp. “Don’t worry about that. I’ll come —”

“Then come.”

She turned from him as he walked beside her, but the smile still flickered across her face, derisive and remote. Only when Lanier spoke to her several times did she manage to fix her attention upon an object, a Punch—and—Judy show, and to orient herself by anchoring to it.

Dick tried to think what to do. The dualism in his views of her—that of the husband, that of the psychiatrist—was increasingly paralysing his faculties. In these nine years she had several times carried him over the line with her, disarming him by exciting emotional pity or by a flow of wit, fantastic and dissociated so that only after the episode did he realize, with the consciousness of his own relaxation from tension, that she had succeeded in getting a point against his better judgement.

A discussion with Topsy about the Guignol—as to whether the Punch was the same Punch they had seen last year in Cannes—having been settled, the family walked along again between the booths under the open sky. The women’s bonnets, perching over velvet vests, the bright, spreading skirts of many cantons, seemed demure against the blue and orange paint of the wagons and displays. There was the sound of a whining, tinkling hootchy-kootchy show.

Nicole began to run very suddenly, so suddenly that for a moment Dick did not miss her. Far ahead he saw her yellow dress twisting through the crowd, an ochre stitch along the edge of reality and unreality, and he started after her, Secretly she ran and secretly he followed. As the hot afternoon went shrill and terrible with her flight he had forgotten the children ; then he wheeled and ran back to them, drawing them this way and that by their arms, his eyes jumping from booth to booth.

“Madame,” he cried to a young woman behind a white lottery wheel, “Est-ce que je peux laisser ces petits avec vous deux minutes? C’est tres urgent—je vous donnerai dix francs.”

“Mais oui.”

He headed the children into the booth. “Alors—restez avec cette gentille dame.”

“Oui, Dick.”

He darted off again, but he had lost her ; he circled the merry-go-round, keeping up with it till he realized he was running beside it, staring always at the same horse. He elbowed through the crowd in the buvette ; then, remembering a predilection of Nicole’s, he snatched up an edge of a fortune-teller’s tent and peered within. A droning voice greeted him: “La septieme fille d’une septieme fille nee sur les rives du Nil—entrez, Monsieur—”

Dropping the flap, he ran along towards where the pleasance terminated at the lake and a small ferns wheel revolved slowly against the sky. There he found her.

She was alone in what was momentarily the top boat of the wheel and, as it descended, he saw that she was laughing hilariously ; he slunk back in the crowd, which, at the wheel’s next revolution, spotted the intensity of Nicole’s hysteria.

“Regardez-moi ca!”

“Regarde donc cette Anglaise!”

Down she dropped again—this time the wheel and its music were slowing and a dozen people were around her car, all of them impelled by the quality of her laughter to smile in sympathetic idiocy. But when Nicole saw Dick her laughter died—she made a gesture of slipping by and away from him, but he caught her arm and held it as they walked away.

“Why did you lose control of yourself like that?”

“You know very well why.”

“No, I don’t.”

“That’s just preposterous—let me loose—that’s an insult my intelligence. Don’t you think I saw that girl look at you—that little dark girl. Oh, this is farcical—a child, not more than fifteen. Don’t you think I saw?”

“Stop here a minute and quiet down.”

They sat at a table, her eyes in a profundity of suspicion, her hand moving across her line of sight as if it were obstructed. “I want a drink—I want a brandy.”

“You can’t have brandy—you can have a bock if you want it.”

“Why can’t I have a brandy?”

“We won’t go into that. Listen to me—this business about a girl is a delusion, do you understand that word?”

“It’s always a delusion when I see what you don’t want me to see.”

He had a sense of guilt, as in one of those nightmares where we are accused of a crime which we recognize as something undeniably experienced, but which upon waking we realize we have not committed. His eyes wavered from hers.

“I left the children with a gypsy woman in a booth. We ought to get them.”

“Who do you think you are?” she demanded. “Svengali?”

Fifteen minutes ago they had been a family. Now as she was crushed into a corner by his unwilling shoulder, he saw them all, child and man, as a perilous accident.

“We’re going home.”

“Home!” she roared in a voice so abandoned that its louder tones wavered and cracked. “And sit and think that we’re all rotting and the children’s ashes are rotting in every box I open? That filth!”

Almost with relief he saw that her words sterilized her, and Nicole, sensitized down to the corium of the skin, saw the withdrawal in his face. Her own face softened and she begged, “Help me, help me, Dick!”

A wave of agony went over him. It was awful that such a fine tower should not be erected, only suspended, suspended from him. Up to a point that was right: men were for that, beam and idea, girder and logarithm; but somehow Dick and Nicole had become one and equal, not opposite and complementary ; she was Dick too, the drought in the marrow of his bones. He could not watch her disintegrations without participating in them. His intuition rilled out of him as tenderness and compassion—he could only take the characteristically modern course, to interpose. He would get a nurse from Zurich, to take her over to-night.

“You can help me.”

Her sweet bullying pulled him forward off his feet. “You’ve helped me before—you can help me now.”

“I can only help you the same old way.”

“Someone can help me.”

“Maybe so. You can help yourself most. Let’s find the children.”

There were numerous lottery booths with white wheels. Dick was startled when he inquired at the first and encountered blank disavowals. Evil-eyed, Nicole stood apart, denying the children, resenting them as part of a downright world she sought to make amorphous. Presently Dick found them, surrounded by women who were examining them with delight like fine goods, and by peasant children staring.

“Merci, Monsieur, et Monsieur est trop genereux. C’etait un plaisir, M’sieur, Dame. Au revoir, mes petits.”

They started back with a hot sorrow streaming down upon them ; the car was weighted with their mutual apprehension and anguish, and the children’s mouths were grave with disappointment. Grief presented itself in its terrible, dark, unfamiliar colour. Somewhere around Zug, Nicole, with a convulsive effort, reiterated a remark she had made before about a misty yellow house set back from the road that looked like a painting not yet dry, but it was just an attempt to catch at a rope that was paying out too swiftly.

Dick tried to rest. The struggle would come presently at home and he might have to sit a long time re-stating the universe for her. A schizophrenic is well named as a split personality—Nicole was alternately a person to whom nothing need be explained and one to whom nothing could be explained. It was necessary to treat her with active and affirmative insistence, keeping the road to reality always open, making the road to escape harder going. But the brilliance, the versatility of madness is akin to the resourcefulness of water seeping through, over, and around a dyke. It requires the united front of many people to work against it. He felt it necessary that this time Nicole cure herself; he wanted to wait until she remembered the other times and revolted from them. In a tired way he planned that they would again resume the regime relaxed two years before.

He had turned up a hill that made a short cut to the clinic and now, as he stepped on the accelerator for a short, straightaway run parallel to the hillside, the car swerved violently left, swerved right, tipped on two wheels and, as Dick, with Nicole’s voice screaming in his ear, crushed down the mad hand clutching the steering wheel, righted itself, swerved once more and shot off the road ; it tore through low underbrush, tipped again, and settled slowly at an angle of ninety degrees against a tree.

The children were screaming and Nicole was screaming and cursing and trying to tear at Dick’s face. Thinking first of the list of the car and unable to estimate it, Dick bent away Nicole’s arm, climbed over the top side and lifted out the children ; then he saw the car was in a stable position. Before doing anything else he stood there shaking and panting.

“You—!” he cried.

She was laughing hilariously, unashamed, unafraid, unconcerned. No one coming on the scene would have imagined that she had caused it; she laughed as after some mild escape of childhood.

“You were scared, weren’t you?” she accused him. “You wanted to live!”

She spoke with such force that in his shocked state Dick wondered if he had been frightened for himself—but the strained faces of the children, looking from parent to parent, made him want to grind her grinning mask into jelly.

Directly above them, half a kilometre by the winding road but only a hundred yards climbing, was an inn ; one of its wings showed through the wooded hill.

“Take Topsy’s hand,” he said to Lanier, “like that, tight, and climb up that hill—see the little path? When you get to the inn tell them, ‘La voiture Divare est cassee.’ Someone must come right down.”

Lanier, not sure what had happened, but suspecting the dark and unprecedented, asked:

“What will you do, Dick?”

“We’ll stay here with the car.”

Neither of them looked at their mother as they started off. “Be careful crossing the road up there! Look both ways!” Dick shouted after them.

He and Nicole looked at each other directly, their eyes like blazing windows across a court of the same house. Then she took out a compact, looked in its mirror, and smoothed back the temple hair. Dick watched the children climbing for a moment until they disappeared among the pines halfway up; then he walked around the car to see the damage and plan how to get it back on the road. In the dirt he could trace the rocking course they had pursued for over a hundred feet; he was filled with a violent disgust that was not like anger.

In a few minutes the proprietor of the inn came running down.

“My God!” he exclaimed. “How did it happen? Were you going fast? What luck! Except for that tree you’d have rolled down hill.”

Taking advantage of Emile’s reality, the wide black apron, the sweat upon the rolls of his face, Dick signalled to Nicole in a matter-of-fact way to let him help her from the car; whereupon she jumped over the lower side, lost her balance on the slope, fell to her knees, and got up again. As she watched the man trying to move the car her expression became defiant. Welcoming even that mood, Dick said:

“Go and wait with the children, Nicole.”

Only after she had gone did he remember that she had wanted cognac, and that there was cognac available up there—he told Emile never mind about the car ; they would wait for the chauffeur and the big car to pull it up on to the ad. Together they hurried up to the inn.

XVI

“I WANT TO GO away,” he told Franz. “For a month or so, for as long as I can.”

“Why not, Dick? That was our original arrangement—it was you who insisted on staying. If you and Nicole —”

“I don’t want to go away with Nicole. I want to go away alone. This last thing knocked me sideways—if I get two hour’s sleep in twenty-four, it’s one of Zwingli’s miracles.”

“You wish a real leave of abstinence?”

“The word is ‘absence’. Look here: if I go to Berlin to the Psychiatric Congress could you manage to keep the peace ? For three months she’s been all right and she likes her nurse. My God, you’re the only human being in this world I can ask this of.”

Franz grunted, considering whether or not he could be trusted to think always of his partner’s interest.

In Zurich the next week Dick drove to the airport and took the big plane for Munich. Soaring and roaring into the blue, he felt numb, realizing how tired he was. A vast persuasive quiet stole over him and he abandoned sickness to the sick, sound to the motors, direction to the pilot. He had no intention of attending so much as a single session of the congress—he could imagine it well enough, new pamphlets by Bleuler and the elder Forel that he could much better digest at home, the paper by the American who cured dementia praecox by pulling out his patients’ teeth or cauterizing their tonsils, the half-derisive respect with which this idea would be greeted, for no more reason than that America was such a rich and powerful country. The other delegates from America—red-headed Schwartz with his saint’s face and his infinite patience in straddling two worlds, as well as dozens of commercial alienists with hang-dog faces, who would be present partly to increase their standing, and hence their reach for the big plums of criminal practice, partly to master novel sophistries that they could weave into their stock in trade, to the infinite confusion of all values. There would be cynical Latins and some man of Freud’s from Vienna. Articulate among them would be the great Jung, bland, super-vigorous, on his rounds between the forests of anthropology and the neuroses of schoolboys. At first there would be an American cast to the congress, almost Rotarian in its forms and ceremonies, then the closer-knit European vitality would fight through, and finally the Americans would play their trump card, the announcement of colossal gifts and endowments, of great new plants and training schools, and in the presence of the figures the Europeans would blanch and walk timidly. But he would not be there to see.

They skirted the Vorarlberg Alps, and Dick felt a pastoral delight in watching the villages. There were always four or five in sight, each one gathered around a church. It was simple looking at the earth from far off, simple as playing grim games with dolls and soldiers. This was the way statesmen and commanders and all retired people looked at things. Anyhow, it was a good draft of relief.

An Englishman spoke to him from across the aisle, but he found something antipathetic in the English lately. England was like a rich man after a disastrous orgy who makes up to the household by chatting with them individually, when it i obvious to them that he is only trying to get back his self-respect in order to usurp his former power.

Dick had with him what magazines were available on the station quays: The Century, the Motion Picture, L’Illustration, and the Fliegende Blatter, but it was more fun to descend in his imagination into the villages and shake hands with the rural characters. He sat in the churches as he sat in his father’s church in Buffalo, amid the starchy must of Sunday clothes, He listened to the wisdom of the Near East, was Crucified, Died, and was Buried in the cheerful church, and once more worried between five or ten cents for the collection plate, because of the girl who sat in the pew behind. The Englishman suddenly borrowed his magazines with a little small change of conversation, and Dick, glad to see them go, thought of the voyage ahead of him. Wolf-like under his sheep’s clothing of long-staple Australian wool, he considered the world of pleasure—the incorruptible Mediterranean with sweet old dirt caked in the olive trees, the peasant girl near Savona with a face as green and rose as the colour of an illuminated missal. He would take her in his hands and snatch her across the border …

… but there he deserted her—he must press on toward Isles of Greece, the cloudy waters of unfamiliar ports, the lost girl on shore, the moon of popular songs. A part of Dick’s mind was made up of the tawdy souvenirs of his boyhood. Yet in that somewhat littered Five—and—Ten, he had managed to keep alive the low painful fire of intelligence.

XVII

TOMMY BARBAN was a ruler, Tommy was a hero—Dick happened upon him in the Marienplatz in Munich, in one of those cafes where small gamblers diced on “tapestry” mats. The air was full of politics and the slap of cards.

Tommy was at a table laughing his martial laugh: “Um-buh—ha-ha! Um-buh—ha-ha!” As a rule he drank little ; courage was his game and his companions were always a little afraid of him. Recently an eighth of the area of his skull had been removed by a Warsaw surgeon and was knitting under his hair, and the weakest person in the cafe could have killed him with a flip of a knotted napkin.

“—this is Prince Chillichev—” a battered, powder-grey Russian of fifty, “—and Mr McKibben—and Mr Harman—” the latter was a lively ball of black eyes and hair, a clown ; and he said immediately to Dick:

“The first thing before we shake hands—what do you mean by fooling around with my aunt?”

“Why, I—”

“You heard me. What are you doing here in Munich, anyhow?”

“Um-bah—ha-ha!” laughed Tommy.

“Haven’t you got aunts of your own? Why don’t you fool with them?”

Dick laughed, whereupon the man shifted his attack:

“Now let’s not have any more talk about aunts. How do I know you didn’t make up the whole thing? Here you are a complete stranger with an acquaintance of less than half an hour, you come to me with a cock-and-bull story about your aunts. How do I know what you have concealed about you?”

Tommy laughed again, then he said good-naturedly, but firmly, “That’s enough, Carly. Sit down, Dick—how’re you? How’s Nicole?”

He did not like any man very much or feel men’s presence with much intensity—he was all relaxed for combat; as a fine athlete playing secondary defence in any sport is really resting much of the time, while a lesser man only pretends to rest and is at a continual and self-destroying nervous tension.

Hannan, not entirely suppressed, moved to an adjoining piano and, with recurring resentment on his face whenever he looked at Dick, played chords, from time to time, muttering, “Your aunts,” and, in a dying cadence, “I didn’t say aunts anyhow. I said pants.”

“Well, how’re you?” repeated Tommy. “You don’t look so—” he fought for a word,“—so jaunty as you used to, so spruce, you know what I mean.”

The remark sounded too much like one of those irritating accusations of waning vitality and Dick was about to retort by commenting on the extraordinary suits worn by Tommy and Prince Chillichev, suits of a cut and pattern fantastic enough to have sauntered down Beale Street on a Sunday—when an explanation was forthcoming.

“I see you are regarding our clothes,” said the Prince. “We have just come out of Russia.”

“These were made in Poland by the court tailor,” said Tommy. “That’s a fact—Pilsudski’s own tailor.”

“You’ve been touring?” Dick asked.

They laughed, the Prince inordinately clapping Tommy on the back.

“Yes, we have been touring. That’s it, touring. We have made the Grand Tour of all the Russias. In state.”

Dick waited for an explanation. It came from Mr McKibben in two words:

“They escaped.”

“Have you been prisoners in Russia?”

“It was I,” explained Prince Cliillichev, his dead yellow eyes staring at Dick. “Not a prisoner but in hiding.”

“Did you have much trouble getting out?”

“Some trouble. We left three Red Guards dead at the border. Tommy left two—” He held up two fingers like a Frenchman—“I left one.”

“That’s the part I don’t understand,” said McKibben. “Why they should have objected to your leaving.”

Hannan turned from the piano and said, winking at the others: “Mac thinks a Marxian is somebody who went to St Mark’s school.”

It was an escape story in the best tradition—an aristocrat hiding nine years with a former servant and working in a government bakery; the eighteen-year-old daughter in Paris who knew Tommy Barban… During the narrative Dick decided that this parched papier-mache relic of the past was scarcely worth the lives of three young men. The question arose as to whether Tommy and Chillichev had been frightened.

“When I was cold,” Tommy said. “I always get scared when I’m cold. During the war I was always frightened when I was cold.”

McKibben stood up.

“I must leave. To-morrow morning I’m going to Innsbruck by car with my wife and children—and the governess.”

“I’m going there to-morrow, too,” said Dick.

“Oh, are you?” exclaimed McKibben. “Why not come with us? It’s a big Packard and there’s only my wife and my children and myself—and the governess —”

“I can’t possibly—”

“Of course she”s not really a governess,“McKibben concluded, looking rather pathetically at Dick. “As a matter of fact my wife knows your sister-in-law, Baby Warren.”

But Dick was not to be drawn into a blind contract.

“I’ve promised to travel with two men.”

“Oh,” McKibben’s face fell. “Well, I’ll say good-bye.” He unscrewed two blooded wire-hairs from a nearby table and departed; Dick pictured the jammed Packard pounding toward Innsbruck with the McKibbens and their children and their baggage and yapping dogs—and the governess.

“The paper says they know the man who killed him,” said Tommy.” But his cousins did not want it in the papers, because it happened in a speakeasy. What do you think of that?““It’s what’s known as family pride.”

Hannan played a loud chord on the piano to attract attention to himself.

“I don’t believe his first stuff holds up,” he said. “Even jarring the Europeans there are a dozen Americans can do what North did.”

It was the first indication Dick had had that they were talking about Abe North.

“The only difference is that Abe did it first,” said Tommy.

“I don’t agree,” persisted Hannan. “He got the reputation for being a good musician because he drank so much that his friends had to explain him away somehow —”

“What’s this about Abe North? What about him? Is he in a jam?”

“Didn’t you read The Herald this morning?”

“No.”” He’s dead. He was beaten to death in a speakeasy in New York. He just managed to crawl home to the Racquet Club to die—““Abe North?”

“Yes, sure, they —”

“Abe North?” Dick stood up. “Are you sure he’s dead?”

Hannan turned around to McKibben:” It wasn’t the Racquet Club he crawled to—it was the Harvard Club. I’m sure he didn’t belong to the Racquet.““The paper said so,” McKibben insisted.

“It must have been a mistake. I’m quite sure.”

“Beaten to death in a speakeasy.”

“But I happen to know most of the members of the Racquet Club,” said Hannan.” It must have been the Harvard Club.“Dick got up, Tommy too. Prince Chillichev started out of . wan study of nothing, perhaps of his chances of ever getting out of Russia, a study that had occupied him so long at it was doubtful if he could give it up immediately, and joined them in leaving.

“Abe North beaten to death.”

On the way to the hotel, a journey of which Dick was scarcely aware, Tommy said:

“We’re waiting for a tailor to finish some suits so we can et to Paris. I’m going into stock-broking and they wouldn’t take me if I showed up like this. Everybody in your country is making millions. Are you really leaving to-morrow? We can’t even have dinner with you. It seems the Prince had an old girl in Munich. He called her up but she’d been dead five years and we’re having dinner with the two daughters.”

The Prince nodded.” Perhaps I could have arranged for Doctor Diver.““No, no,” said Dick hastily.

He slept deep and awoke to a slow mournful march passing his window. It was a long column of men in uniform, wearing the familiar helmet of 1914, thick men in frock coats and silk hats, burghers, aristocrats, plain men. It was a society of veterans going to lay wreaths on the tombs of the dead. The column marched slowly with a sort of swagger for a lost magnificence, a past effort, a forgotten sorrow. The faces were only formally sad, but Dick’s lungs burst for a moment with regret for Abe’s death, and his own youth of ten years ago.

XVIII

HE REACHED INNSBRUCK AT dusk, sent his bags up to a hotel and walked into town. In the sunset the Emperor Maximilian knelt in prayer above his bronze mourners: a quartet of Jesuit novices paced and read in the university garden. The marble souvenirs of old sieges, marriages, anniversaries, faded quickly when the sun was down, and he had Erbsen-suppe with Wurstchen cut up in it, drank four seidels of Pilsner and refused a formidable dessert known as Kaiserschmarren.

Despite the overhanging mountains Switzerland was far away, Nicole was far away. Walking in the garden later when it was quite dark he thought about her with detachment, loving her for her best self. He remembered once when the grass was damp and she came to him on hurried feet, her thin slippers drenched with dew. She stood upon his shoes nestling close and held up her face, showing it as a book open at a page.

“Think how you love me,” she whispered. “I don’t ask you love me always like this, but I ask you to remember, Somewhere inside me there’ll always be the person I am to-light.”

But Dick had come away for his soul’s sake, and he began thinking about that. He had lost himself—he could not tell the hour when, or the day or the week, the month or the year. Once he had cut through things, solving the most complicated equations as the simplest problems of his simplest patients. Between the time he found Nicole flowering under a stone on the Zurichsee and the moment of his meeting with Rosemary the spear had been blunted.

Watching his father's struggles in poor parishes had wedded a desire for money to an essentially unacquisitive nature. It was not a healthy necessity for security—he had never felt more sure of himself, more thoroughly his own man, than at the time of his marriage to Nicole. Yet he had been swallowed up like a gigolo and had somehow permitted his arsenal to be locked up in the Warren safety-deposit vaults.

“There should have been a settlement in the Continental style ; but it isn't over yet. I've wasted nine years teaching the rich the A B C's of human decency, but I'm not done. I've got too many unplayed trumps in my hand.”

He loitered among the fallow rose bushes and the beds of damp sweet indistinguishable fern. It was warm for October, but cool enough to wear a heavy tweed coat buttoned by a little elastic tape at the neck. A figure detached itself from the black shape of a tree and he knew it was the woman whom he had passed in the lobby coming out. He vas in love with every pretty woman he saw now, their forms at a distance, their shadows on a wall.

Her back was toward him as she faced the lights of the town. He scratched a match that she must have heard, but she remained motionless.

—Was it an invitation? Or an indication of obliviousness? He had long been outside of the world of simple desires and their fulfilments, and he was inept and uncertain. For all he knew there might be some code among the wanderers of obscure spas by which they found each other quickly.

—Perhaps the next gesture was his. Strange children should smile at each other and say, “Let's play.”

He moved closer, the shadow moved sideways. Possibly he would be snubbed like the scapegrace drummers he had heard of in youth. His heart beat loud in contact with the unprobed, undissected, unanalysed, unaccounted for. Suddenly he turned away and, as he did, the girl, too, broke the black frieze she made with the foliage, rounded a bench at a moderate but determined pace and took the path back to the hotel.

With a guide and two other men, Dick started up the Birkkarspitze next morning. It was a fine feeling once they were above the cowbells of the highest pastures—Dick looked forward to the night in the shack, enjoying his own fatigue, enjoying the captaincy of the guide, feeling a delight in his own anonymity. But at mid-day the weather changed to black sleet and hail and mountain thunder. Dick and one of the other climbers wanted to go on, but the guide refused. Regretfully they struggled back to Innsbruck to start again to-morrow.

After dinner and a bottle of heavy local wine in the deserted dining-room, he felt excited, without knowing why, until he began thinking of the garden. He had passed the girl in the lobby before supper and this time she had looked at him and approved of him, but it kept worrying him: Why? When I could have had a good share of the pretty women of my time for the asking, why start that now? With a wraith, with a fragment of my desire? Why?

His imagination pushed ahead—the old asceticism, the actual unfamiliarity, triumphed: God, I might as well go back to the Riviera and sleep with Janice Caricamento or the Wilburhazy girl. To belittle all these years with something cheap and easy?

He was still excited, though, and he turned from the veranda and went up to his room to think. Being alone in body and spirit begets loneliness, and loneliness begets more loneliness.

Upstairs he walked around thinking of the matter and laying out his climbing clothes advantageously on the faint heater: he again encountered Nicole’s telegram, still unopened, with which diurnally she accompanied his itinerary. He had delayed opening it before supper—perhaps because of the garden. It was a cablegram from Buffalo, forwarded through Zurich.

“Your father died peacefully to-night.
HOLMES.”

He felt a sharp wince at the shock, a gathering of the forces of resistance; then it rolled through his loins and stomach and throat.

He read the message again. He sat down on the bed, breathing and staring; thinking first the old, selfish child’s thought that comes with the death of a parent, how will it affect me now that this earliest and strongest of protections is gone?

The atavism passed and he walked the room still, stopping from time to time to look at the telegram. Holmes was formally his father’s curate but actually, and for a decade, rector the church. How did he die? Of old age—he was seventy-five. He had lived a long time.

Dick felt sad that he had died alone—he had survived his wife, and his brothers and sisters ; there were cousins in Virginia, but they were poor and not able to come North, and Holmes had had to sign the telegram. Dick loved his father—again and again he referred judgements to what his father would probably have thought or done. Dick was born several months after the death of two young sisters, and his father, jessing what would be the effect on Dick’s mother, had saved him from a spoiling by becoming his moral guide. He was of tired stock yet he raised himself to that effort.

In the summer father and son walked downtown together to have their shoes shined —Dick in his starched duck sailor suit, his father always in beautifully cut clerical clothes—and the father was very proud of his handsome little boy. He told Dick all he knew about life, not much but most of it true, simple things, matters of behaviour that came within his clergyman’s range. “Once in a strange town when I was first ordained, I went into a crowded room and was confused as to who was my hostess. Several people I knew came toward me, but I disregarded them because I had seen a greyhaired woman sitting by a window far across the room. I went over to her and introduced myself. After that I made many friends in that town.”

His father had done that from a good heart—his father had been sure of what he was, with a deep pride of the two proud widows who had raised him to believe that nothing could be superior to “good instincts”, honour, courtesy, and courage.

The father always considered that his wife’s small fortune belonged to his son, and in college and in medical school sent him a cheque for all the income four tunes a year. He was one of those about whom it was said with smug finality in the gilded age: “Very much the gentleman, but not much get-up-and-go about him.”

… Dick sent down for a newspaper. Still pacing to and from the telegram open on his bureau, he chose a ship to go to America. Then he put in a call for Nicole in Zurich, remembering so many things as he waited, and wishing he had always been as good as he had intended to be.

XIX

FOR AN HOUR, TIED up with his profound reaction to his father’s death, the magnificent facade of the homeland, the harbour of New York, seemed all sad and glorious to Dick, but once ashore the feeling vanished, nor did he find it again in the streets or the hotels or the trains that bore him first to Buffalo, and then south to Virginia with his father’s body. Only as the local train shambled into the low-forested clay-land of Westmoreland County did he feel once more identified with his surroundings ; at the station he saw a star he knew, and a cold moon bright over Chesapeake Bay; he heard the rasping wheels of buckboards turning, the lovely fatuous voices, the sound of sluggish primeval rivers flowing softly under soft Indian names.

Next day at the churchyard his father was laid among a hundred Divers, Dorseys, and Hunters. It was very friendly leaving him there with all his relations around him. Flowers were scattered on the brown unsettled earth. Dick had no more ties here now and did not believe he would come back. He knelt on the hard soil. These dead, he knew them all, their weather-beaten faces with blue flashing eyes, the spare violent bodies, the souls made of new earth in the forest-heavy darkness of the seventeenth century.

“Good-bye, my father—good-bye, all my fathers.”

On the long-roofed, steamship piers one is in a country that is no longer here and not yet there. The hazy yellow vault is full of echoing shouts. There are the rumble of trucks and the clump of trunks, the strident chatter of cranes, the first salt smell of the sea. One hurries through, even though there’s time; the past, the continent, is behind ; the future is the glowing mouth in the side of the ship; the dun, turbulent alley is loo confusedly the present.

Up the gangplank and the vision of the world adjusts itself, narrows. One is a citizen of a commonwealth smaller than Andorra, no longer sure of anything. The men at the purser’s desk are as oddly shaped as the cabins ; disdainful are the eyes of voyagers and their friends. Next the loud mournful whistles, the portentous vibration and the boat, the human idea, is in motion. The pier and its faces slide by and for a moment the boat is a piece accidentally split off from them ; the faces become remote, voiceless, the pier is one of many blurs along the water-front. The harbour flows swiftly toward the sea.

With it flowed Albert McKisco, labelled by the newspapers as the steamer’s most precious cargo. McKisco was having a vogue. His novels were pastiches of the work of the best people of his time, a feat not to be disparaged, and in addition he possessed a gift for softening and debasing what he borrowed, so that many readers were charmed by the ease with which they could follow him. Success had improved him and humbled him. He was no fool about his capacities—he realized that he possessed more vitality than many men of superior talent, and he was resolved to enjoy the success he had earned. “I’ve done nothing yet,” he would say. “I don’t think I’ve got any real genius. But if I keep trying I may write a good book.” Fine dives have been made from flimsier spring-boards. The innumerable snubs of the past were forgotten. Indeed, his success was founded psychologically upon his duel with Tommy Barban, upon the basis of which, as it withered in his memory, he had created, afresh, a new self-respect.

Spotting Dick Diver the second day out, he eyed him tentatively, then introduced himself in a friendly way and sat down. Dick laid aside his reading and, after the few minutes that it took to realize the change in McKisco, the disappearance of the man’s annoying sense of inferiority, found himself pleased to talk to him. McKisco was “well-informed” on a range of subjects wider than Goethe’s—it was interesting to listen to the innumerable facile combin-tions that he referred to as his opinions. They struck up an acquaintance and Dick had several meals with them. The McKiscos had been invited to sit at the captain’s table, but with nascent snobbery they told Dick that “they couldn’t stand that bunch.”

Violet was very grand now, decked out by the grand couturiers, charmed about the little discoveries that well-bred girls make in their teens. She could, indeed, have learned them from her mother in Boise but her soul was born dismally in the small movie houses of Idaho, and she had had no time for her mother. Now she “belonged”—together with several million other people—and she was happy, though her husband still shushed her when she grew violently naive.

The McKiscos got off at Gibraltar. Next evening in Naples Dick picked up a lost and miserable family of two girls and their mother in the bus from the hotel to the station. He had seen them on the ship. An overwhelming desire to help, or to be admired, came over him: he showed them fragments of gaiety ; tentatively he bought them wine, with pleasure saw them begin to regain their proper egotism. He pretended they were this and that and, falling in with his own plot, drank too much to sustain the illusion, and all this time the women thought only that this was a windfall from heaven. He withdrew from them as the night waned and the train rocked and snorted at Cassino and Frosinone. Early in the morning, after weird American partings in the station at Rome, Dick went to the Hotel Quirinal, somewhat exhausted.

At the desk he suddenly stared and upped his head. As if a drink were acting on him, warming the lining of his stomach, throwing a flush up into his brain, he saw the person he had come to see, the person for whom he had made the Mediterranean crossing.

Simultaneously Rosemary saw him, acknowledging him before placing him; she looked back startled and, leaving the girl she was with, she hurried over. Holding himself erect, holding his breath, Dick turned to her. As she came across the lobby, her beauty all groomed like a young horse dosed with Black-seed oil and hoofs varnished, shocked him awake ; but it all came too quick for him to do anything except conceal his fatigue as best he could. To meet her starry-eyed confidence he mustered an insincere pantomime implying, “You would turn up here—of all the people in the world.”

Her gloved hands closed over his on the desk; “Dick—we’re making The Grandeur that was Rome—at least we think we are; we may quit any day.”

He looked at her hard, trying to make her a little self-conscious, so that she would observe less closely his unshaven face, his crumpled and slept-in collar. Fortunately she was in a hurry.

“We begin early because the mists rise at eleven—phone me at two.”

In his room Dick collected his faculties. He left a call for noon, stripped off his clothes, and dived literally into a heavy sleep.

He slept over the phone call but awoke at one, refreshed. Unpacking his bag, he sent out suits and laundry. He shaved, lay for half an hour in a warm bath and had breakfast. The sun had dipped into the Via Nazionale and he let it through the portieres with a jingling of old brass rings. Waiting for a suit to be pressed, he read the Corriere della Sera and learned about “una novella di Sainclair Lewis Wall Street nellaquale l’autore analizzala vita sociale di unapiccola citta Americana.” Then he tried to think about Rosemary.

At first he thought nothing. She was young and magnetic, but so was Topsy. He guessed that she had had lovers and had loved them in the last four years. Well, you never knew exactly how much space you occupied in people’s lives. Yet from this fog his affection emerged—the best contacts are when one knows the obstacles and still wants to preserve a relation. The past drifted back and he wanted to hold her eloquent giving-of-herself in its precious shell, till he enclosed it, till it no longer existed outside him. He tried to collect all that might attract her—it was less than it had been four years ago. Eighteen might look at thirty-four through a rising mist of adolescence ; but twenty-two would see thirty-eight with discerning clarity. Moreover, Dick had been at an emotional peak at the time of the previous encounter ; since then there had been a lesion of enthusiasm.

When the valet returned he put on a white shirt and collar and a black tie with a pearl ; the cords of his reading glasses passed through another pearl of the same size that swung a casual inch below. After sleep, his face had resumed the ruddy brown of many Riviera summers, and to limber himself up he stood on his hands on a chair until his fountain pen and coins fell out. At three he called Rosemary and was bidden to come up. Momentarily dizzy from his acrobatics, he stopped in the bar for a gin-and-tonic.

“Hi, Doctor Diver!”

Only because of Rosemary’s presence in the hotel did Dick place the man immediately as Collis Clay. He had his old confidence and an air of prosperity and big sudden jowls.

“Do you know Rosemary’s here?” Collis asked.

“I ran into her.”

“I was in Florence and I heard she was here, so I came down last week. You’d never know Mama’s little girl.” He modified the remark, “I mean she was so carefully brought up and now she’s a woman of the world—if you know what I mean. Believe me, has she got some of these Roman boys tied up in bags! And how!”

“You studying in Florence?”

“Me? Sure, I’m studying architecture there. I go back Sunday—I’m staying for the races.”

With difficulty Dick restrained him from adding the drink to the account he carried in the bar, like a stock-market report.

XX

WHEN DICK GOT OUT of the elevator he followed a tortuous corridor and turned at length toward a distant voice outside a lighted door. Rosemary was in black pyjamas ; a

luncheon table was still in the room ; she was having coffee.

“You’re still beautiful,” he said. “A little more beautiful than ever.”

“Do you want coffee, youngster?”

’I’m sorry I was so unpresentable this morning.““You didn’t look well—you all right now? Want coffee?”

“No, thanks.”

“You’re fine again, I was scared this morning. Mother’s coming over next month, if the company stays. She always asks me if I’ve seen you over here, as if she thought we were living next door. Mother always liked you—she always felt you were someone I ought to know.”

“Well, I’m glad she still thinks of me.”

“Oh, she does,” Rosemary reassured him. “A very great deal.”

“I’ve seen you here and there in pictures,” said Dick.” Once I had Daddy’s Girl run off just for myself.““I have a good part in this one if it isn’t cut.”

She crossed behind him, touching his shoulder as she passed. She phoned for the table to be taken away and settled in a big chair.

“I was just a little girl when I met you, Dick. Now I’m a woman.”

“I want to hear everything about you.”

“How is Nicole—and Lanier and Topsy?”

“They’re fine. They often speak of you—”

The phone rang. While she answered it Dick examined two novels—one by Edna Ferber, one by Albert McKisco. The waiter came for the table ; bereft of its presence Rosemary seemed more alone in her black pyjamas.

“… I have a caller… No, not very well. I’ve got to go to the costumier’s for a long fitting… No, not now…”

As though with the disappearance of the table she felt released, Rosemary smiled at Dick—that smile as if they two together had managed to get rid of all the trouble in the world and were now at peace in their own heaven.

“That’s done,” she said. “Do you realize I’ve spent the last hour getting ready for you?”

But again the phone called her. Dick got up to change his hat from the bed to the luggage stand, and in alarm Rosemary put her hand over the mouthpiece of the phone. “You’re not going!”

“No.”

When the communication was over he tried to drag the afternoon together, saying: “I expect some nourishment from people now.”

“Me, too,” Rosemary agreed. “The man that just phoned me once knew a second cousin of mine. Imagine calling anybody up for a reason like that!”

Now she lowered the lights for love. Why else should she want to shut off his view of her? He sent his words to her like letters, as though they left him some time before they reached her.

“Hard to sit here and be close to you, and not kiss you.” Then they kissed passionately in the centre of the floor. She pressed against him, and went back to her chair.

It could not go on being merely pleasant in the room. Forward or backward ; when the phone rang once more he strolled into the bedchamber and lay down on her bed, opening Albert McKisco’s novel. Presently Rosemary came in and sat beside him.

“You have the longest eyelashes,” she remarked.”We are now back at the Junior Prom. Among those present arc Miss Rosemary Hoyt, the eyelash fancier—

She kissed him and he pulled her down so that they lay side by side, and then they kissed till they were both breathless. Her breathing was young and eager and exciting. Her lips were faintly chapped but soft in the corners.

When they were still limbs and feet and clothes, struggles of his arms and back, and her throat and breasts, she whispered, “No, not now—those things are rhythmic.”

Disciplined he crushed his passion into a corner of his mind, but bearing up her fragility on his arm until she was poised half a foot above him, he said lightly:

“Darling—that doesn’t matter.”

Her face had changed with his looking up at it; there was the eternal moonlight in it.

“That would be poetic justice if it should be you,” she said. She twisted away from him, walked to the mirror, and boxed her disarranged hair with her hands. Presently she drew a chair close to the bed and stroked his cheek.

“Tell me the truth about you,” he demanded.

“I always have.”

“In a way—but nothing hangs together.”

They both laughed, but he pursued.

“Are you actually a virgin?”

“No-o-o!” she sang. “I’ve slept with six hundred and forty men—if that’s the answer you want.”

“It’s none of my business.”

“Do you want me for a case in psychology?”

“Looking at you as a perfectly normal girl of twenty-two, living in the year nineteen twenty-nine, I guess you’ve taken a few shots at love.”

“It’s all been—abortive,” she said.

Dick couldn’t believe her. He could not decide whether she was deliberately building a barrier between them or whether this was intended to make an eventual surrender more significant.

“Let’s go walk in the Pincio,” he suggested.

He shook himself straight in his clothes and smoothed his hair. A moment had come and somehow passed. For three years Dick had been the ideal by which Rosemary measured other men and inevitably his stature had increased to heroic size. She did not want him to be like other men, yet here were the same exigent demands, as if he wanted to take some of herself away, carry it off in his pocket.

Walking on the greensward between cherubs and philosophers, fauns and falling water, she took his arm snugly, settling into it with a series of little readjustments, as if she wanted it to be right because it was going to be there for ever. She plucked a twig and broke it, but she found no spring in it. Suddenly seeing what she wanted in Dick’s face she took his gloved hand and kissed it. Then she cavorted childishly for him until he smiled and she laughed and they began having a good time.

“I can’t go out with you to-night, darling, because I promised some people a long time ago. But if you’ll get up early I’ll take you out to the set to-morrow.”

He dined alone at the hotel, went to bed early, and met Rosemary in the lobby at half-past six. Beside him in the car she glowed away fresh and new in the morning sunshine. They went out through the Porta San Sebastiano and along the Appian Way until they came to the huge set of the forum, larger than the forum itself. Rosemary turned him over to a man who led him about the great props: the arches and tiers of seats and the sanded arena. She was working on a stage which represented a guard-room for Christian prisoners, and presently they went there and watched Nicotera, one of many hopeful Valentinos, strut and pose before a dozen female “captives,” their eyes melancholy and startling with mascara.

Rosemary appeared in a knee-length tunic.

“Watch this,” she whispered to Dick. “I want your opinion. Everybody that’s seen the rushes says—”

“What are the rushes?”

“When they run off what they took the day before. They say it’s the first thing I’ve had sex appeal in.”

“I don’t notice it.”

“You wouldn’t! But I have.”

Nicotera in his leopard skin talked attentively to Rosemary while the electrician discussed something with the director, meanwhile leaning on him. Finally the director pushed his hand off roughly and wiped a sweating forehead, and Dick’s guide remarked ; “He’s on the hop again, and how!”

“Who?” asked Dick, but before the man could answer the director walked swiftly over to them.

“Who’s on the hop—you’re on the hop yourself.” He spoke vehemently to Dick, as if to a jury. “When he’s on the hop he always thinks everybody else is, and how!” He glared at the guide a moment longer, then he clapped his hands: “All right—everybody on the set.”

It was like visiting a great turbulent family. An actress approached Dick and talked to him for five minutes under the impression that he was an actor recently arrived from London. Discovering her mistake she scuttled away in panic. The majority of the company felt either sharply superior or sharply inferior to the world outside, but the former feeling prevailed. They were people of bravery and industry ; they were risen to a position of prominence in a nation that for a decade had wanted only to be entertained.

The session ended as the light grew misty—a fine light for painters, but, for the camera, not to be compared with the clear California air. Nicotera followed Rosemary to the car and whispered something to her—she looked at him without smiling as she said good-bye.

Dick and Rosemary had luncheon at the Castelli dei Cesari, a splendid restaurant in a high-terraced villa overlooking the ruined forum of an undetermined period of the decadence. Rosemary took a cocktail and a little wine, and Dick took enough so that his feeling of dissatisfaction left him. Afterward they drove back to the hotel, all flushed and happy, in a sort of exalted quiet. She wanted to be taken and she was, and what had begun with a childish infatuation on a beach was accomplished at last.

XXI

ROSEMARY HAD ANOTHER DINNER date, a birthday party for a member of the company. Dick ran into Collis Clay in the lobby, but he wanted to dine alone and pretended an engagement at the Excelsior. He drank a cocktail with Collis and his vague dissatisfaction crystallized as impatience—he no longer had an excuse for playing truant to the clinic. This was less an infatuation than a romantic memory. Nicole was his girl—too often he was sick at heart about her, yet she was his girl. Time with Rosemary was self-indulgence—time with Collis was nothing plus nothing.

In the doorway of the Excelsior he ran into Baby Warren. Her large beautiful eyes, looking precisely like marbles, stared at him with surprise and curiosity. “I thought you were in America, Dick! Is Nicole with you?”

“I came back by way of Naples.”

The black band on his arm reminded her to say: “I’m so sorry to hear of your trouble.”

Inevitably they dined together.

“Tell me about everything,” she demanded.

Dick gave her a version of the facts, and Baby frowned. She found it necessary to blame someone for the catastrophe in her sister’s life.

“Do you think Doctor Dohmler took the right course with her from the first?”

“There’s not much variety in treatment any more—of course you try to find the right personality to handle a particular case.”

“Dick, I don’t pretend to advise you or to know much about it, but don’t you think a change might be good for her—to get out of that atmosphere of sickness and live in the world like other people?”

“But you were keen for the clinic,” he reminded her. “You told me you’d never feel really safe about her —”

“That was when you were leading that hermit’s life on the Riviera, up on a hill way off from anybody. I didn’t mean to go back to that life. I meant, for instance, London. The English are the best-balanced race in the world.”

“They are not,” he disagreed.

“They are. I know them, you see. I meant it might be nice for you to take a house in London for the spring season—I know a dove of a house in Talbot Square you could get, furnished. I mean, living with sane, well-balanced English people.”

She would have gone on to tell him all the old propaganda stories of 1914 if he had not laughed and said:

“I’ve been reading a book by Michael Arlen and if that’s—”

She ruined Michael Arlen with a wave of her salad spoon.

“He only writes about degenerates. I mean the worthwhile English.”

As she thus dismissed her friends they were replaced in Dick’s mind only by a picture of the alien, unresponsive faces that peopled the small hotels of Europe.

“Of course it’s none of my business,” Baby repeated, as a preliminary to a further plunge, “but to leave her alone in an atmosphere like that —”

“I went to America because my father died.”

“I understand that, I told you how sorry I was.” She fiddled with the glass grapes on her necklace. “But there’s so much money now. Plenty for everything, and it ought to be used to get Nicole well.”

“For one thing I can’t see myself in London.”

“Why not? I should think you could work there as well as anywhere else.”

He sat back and looked at her. If she had ever suspected the rotted old truth, the real reason for Nicole’s illness, she had certainly determined to deny it to herself, shoving it back in a dusty closet like one of the paintings she bought by mistake.

They continued the conversation in the Ulpia, where Collis Clay came over to their table and sat down, and a gifted guitar player thrummed and rumbled “Suona Fanfara Mia” in the cellar piled with wine casks.

“It’s possible that I was the wrong person for Nicole,” Dick said. “Still, she would probably have married someone of my type, someone she thought she could rely on—indefinitely.”

“You think she’d be happier with somebody else?” Baby thought aloud suddenly. “Of course it could be arranged.”

Only as she saw Dick bend forward with helpless laughter did she realize the preposterousness of her remark.

“Oh, you understand,” she assured him. “Don’t think for a moment that we’re not grateful for all you’ve done. And we know you’ve had a hard time —”

“For God’s sake,” he protested. “If I didn’t love Nicole it might be different.”

“But you do love Nicole?” she demanded in alarm.

Collis was catching up with the conversation now and Dick switched it quickly: “Suppose we talk about something else—about you, for instance. Why don’t you get married? We heard you were engaged to Lord Paley, the cousin of the—”

“Oh, no.” She became coy and elusive. “That was last year.”

“Why don’t you marry?” Dick insisted stubbornly.

“I don’t know. One of the men I loved was killed in the war, and the other one threw me over.”

“Tell me about it. Tell me about your private life, Baby, and your opinions. You never do—we always talk about Nicole.”

“Both of them were Englishmen. I don’t think there’s any higher type in the world than a first-rate Englishman, do you? If there is I haven’t met him. This man—oh, it’s a long story. I hate long stories, don’t you?”

“And how!” said Collis.

“Why, no—I like them if they’re good.”

“That’s something you do so well, Dick. You can keep a party moving by just a little sentence or a saying here and there. I think that’s a wonderful talent.”

“It’s a trick,” he said gently. That made three of her opinions he disagreed with.

“Of course I like formality—I like things to be just so, and on the grand scale. I know you probably don’t, but you must admit it’s a sign of solidity in me.”

Dick did not even bother to dissent from this.

“Of course I know people say. Baby Warren is racing around over Europe, chasing one novelty after another, and missing the best things in life, but I think on the contrary that I’m one of the few people who really go after the best things. I’ve known the most interesting people of my time.” Her voice blurred with the tinny drumming of another guitar number, but she called over it, “I’ve made very few big mistakes —”

“— Only the very big ones, Baby.”

She had caught something facetious in his eye and she changed the subject. It seemed impossible for them to hold anything in common. But he admired something in her, and he deposited her at the Excelsior with a series of compliments that left her shimmering.

Rosemary insisted on treating Dick to lunch next day. They went to a little trattoria kept by an Italian who had worked in America, and ate ham and eggs and waffles. Afterwards they went to the hotel. Dick’s discovery that he was not in love with her, nor she with him, had added to rallier than diminished his passion for her. Now that he knew he would not enter further into her life, she became the strange woman for him. He supposed many men meant no more than that when they said they were in love—not a wild submergence of soul, a dipping of all colours into an obscuring dye, such as his love for Nicole had been. Certain thoughts about Nicole, that she should die, sink into mental darkness, love another man, made him physically sick.

Nicotera was in Rosemary’s sitting-room, chattering about a professional matter. When Rosemary gave him his cue to go, he left with humorous protests and a rather insolent wink at Dick. As usual the phone clamoured and Rosemary was engaged at it for ten minutes to Dick’s increasing impatience.

“Let’s go up to my room,” he suggested, and she agreed.

She lay across his knees on a big sofa ; he ran his fingers through the lovely forelocks of her hair.

“Let me be curious about you again?” he asked.

“What do you want to know?”

“About men. I’m curious, not to say prurient.”

“You mean how long after I met you?”

“Or before.”

“Oh, no.”

She was shocked. “There was nothing before. You were the first man I cared about. You’re still the only man I really care about.” She considered. “It was about a year, I think.”

“Who was it?”

“Oh, a man.”

He closed in on her evasion.

“I’ll bet I can tell you about it: the first affair was unsatisfactory and after that there was a long gap. The second was better, but you hadn’t been in love with the man in the first place. The third was all right —”

Torturing himself he ran on. “Then you had one real affair that fell of its own weight, and by that time you were getting afraid that you wouldn’t have anything to give to the man you finally loved.” He felt increasingly Victorian. “Afterward there were half a dozen just episodic affairs, right up to the present. Is that close?”

She laughed between amusement and tears.

“It’s about as wrong as it could be,” she said, to Dick’s relief. “But some day I’m going to find somebody and love him and love him and never let him go.”

Now his phone rang and Dick recognized Nicotera’s voice, asking for Rosemary. He put his palm over the transmitter.

“Do you want to talk to him?”

She went to the phone and jabbered in a rapid Italian Dick could not understand.

“This telephoning takes time,” he said. “It’s after four and I have an engagement at five. You better go play with Signor Nicotera.”

“Don’t be silly.”

“Then I think that while I’m here you ought to count him out.”

“It’s difficult.” She was suddenly crying. “Dick, I do love you, never anybody like you. But what have you got for me?”

“What has Nicotera got for anybody?”

“That’s different.”

—Because youth called to youth.

“He’s a spic!” he said. He was frantic with jealousy, he didn’t want to be hurt again.

“He’s only a baby,” she said, sniffing. “You know I’m yours first.”

In reaction he put his arms about her but she relaxed wearily backward ; he held her like that for a moment as in the end of an adagio, her eyes closed, her hair falling straight back like that of a girl drowned.

“Dick, let me go. I never felt so mixed up in my life.”

He was a gruff red bird and instinctively she drew away from him as his unjustified jealousy began to snow over the qualities of consideration and understanding with which she felt at home.

“I want to know the truth,” he said.

“Yes, then. We’re a lot together, he wants to marry me, but I don’t want to. What of it? What do you expect me to do? You never asked me to marry you. Do you want me to play around for ever with halfwits like Collis Clay?”

“You were with Nicotera last night?”

“That’s none of your business,” she sobbed. “Excuse me, Dick, it is your business. You and Mother are the only two people in the world I care about.”

“How about Nicotera?”

“How do I know?”

She had achieved the elusiveness that gives hidden significance to the least significant remarks.

“Is it like you felt toward me in Paris?”

“I feel comfortable and happy when I’m with you. In Paris it was different. But you never know how you once felt. Do you?”

He got up and began collecting his evening clothes—if he had to bring all the bitterness and hatred of the world into his heart, he was not going to be in love with her again.

“I don’t care about Nicotera!” she declared. “But I’ve got to go to Livorno with the company to-morrow. Oh, why did this have to happen?” There was a new flood of tears. “It’s such a shame. Why did you come here? Why couldn’t we just have the memory anyhow? I feel as if I’d quarrelled with Mother.”

As he began to dress, she got up and went to the door.

“I won’t go to the party to-night.” It was her last effort. “I’ll stay with you. I don’t want to go anyhow.”

The tide began to flow again, but he retreated from it.

“I’ll be in my room,” she said. “Good-bye, Dick.”

“Good-bye.”

“Oh, such a shame, such a shame. Oh, such a shame. What’s it all about anyhow?”

“I’ve wondered for a long time.”

“But why bring it to me?”

“I guess I’m the Black Death,” he said slowly. “I don’t seem to bring people happiness any more.”

XXII

THERE WERE FIVE PEOPLE in the Quirinal bar after dinner, a high-class Italian frail who sat on a stool making persistent conversation against the bartender’s bored “Si… Si… Si,” a light, snobbish Egyptian who was lonely but chary of the woman, and the two Americans.

Dick was always vividly conscious of his surroundings, while Collis Clay lived vaguely, the sharpest impressions dissolving upon a recording apparatus that had early atrophied, so the former talked and the latter listened, like a man sitting in a breeze.

Dick, worn away by the events of the afternoon, was taking it out on the inhabitants of Italy. He looked around the bar as if he hoped an Italian had heard him and would resent his words.

“This afternoon I had tea with my sister-in-law at the Excelsior. We got the last table and two men came up and looked around for a table and couldn’t find one. So one of them came up to us and said, ‘Isn’t this table reserved for the Princess Orsini?’ and I said, ‘There was no sign on it,’ and he said: ‘But I think it’s reserved for the Princess Orsini.’ I couldn’t even answer him.”

“What’d he do?”

“He retired.” Dick switched around in his chair. “I don’t like these people. The other day I left Rosemary for two minutes in front of a store and an officer started walking up and down in front of her, tipping his hat.”

“I don’t know,” said Collis after a moment. “I’d rather be here than up in Paris with somebody picking your pocket every minute.”

He had been enjoying himself, and he held out against anything that threatened to dull his pleasure.

“I don’t know,” he persisted. “I don’t mind it here.”

Dick evoked the picture that the few days had imprinted on his mind, and stared at it. The walk toward the American Express past the odorous confectioneries of the Via Nazionale, through the foul tunnel up to the Spanish Steps, where his spirit soared before the flower stalls and the house where Keats had died. He cared only about people; he was scarcely conscious of places except for their weather, until they had been invested with colour by tangible events. Rome was the end of his dream of Rosemary.

A bell-boy came in and gave him a note.

“I did not go to the party,” it said. “I am in my room. We leave for Livorno early in the morning.”

Dick handed the note and a tip to the boy.

“Tell Miss Hoyt you couldn’t find me.” Turning to Collis he suggested the Bonbonieri.

They inspected the tart at the bar, granting her the minimum of interest exacted by her profession, and she stared back with bright boldness ; they went through the deserted lobby oppressed by draperies holding Victorian dust in stuffy folds, and they nodded at the night concierge, who returned the gesture with the bitter servility peculiar to night servants. Then in a taxi they rode along cheerless streets through a dank November night. There were no women in the streets, only pale men with dark coats buttoned to the neck, who stood in groups beside shoulders of old stone.

“My God!” Dick sighed.

“What’s a matter?”

“I was thinking of that man this afternoon: ‘This table is served for the Princess Orsini.’ Do you know what these old Roman families are? They’re bandits, they’re the ones who got possession of the temples and palaces after Rome vent to pieces and preyed on the people.”

“I like Rome,” insisted Collis. “Why won’t you try the races ?”

“I don’t like races.”

“But all the women turn out—”

“I know I wouldn’t like anything here. I like France, where everybody thinks he’s Napoleon—down here everybody thinks he’s Christ.”

At the Bonbonieri they descended to a panelled cabaret, hopelessly impermanent amid the cold stone. A listless band played a tango and a dozen couples covered the wide floor with those elaborate and dainty steps so offensive to the American eye. A surplus of waiters precluded the stir and bustle that even a few busy men can create; over the scene as its form of animation brooded an air of waiting for something the dance, the night, the balance of forces which kept it stable—to cease. It assured the impressionable guest that whatever he was seeking he would not find it here.

This was plain as plain to Dick. He looked around, hoping his eye would catch on something, so that spirit instead of imagination could carry on for an hour. But there was nothing and after a moment he turned back to Collis. He had told Collis some of his current notions, and he was bored with his audience’s short memory and lack of response. After half an hour of Collis he felt a distinct lesion of his own vitality.

They drank a bottle of Italian mousseux and Dick became pale and somewhat noisy. He called the orchestra leader over to their table ; this was a Bahama Negro, conceited and unpleasant, and in a few minutes there was a row.

“You asked rne to sit down.”

“All right. And I gave you fifty lire, didn’t I?”

“All right. All right. All right.”

“All right, I gave you fifty lire, didn’t I? Then you came up and asked me to put some more in the horn.”

“You asked me to sit down, didn’t you? Didn’t you?”

“I asked you to sit down but I gave you fifty lire, didn’t I ?”

“All right. All right.”

The Negro got up sourly and went away, leaving Dick in a still more evil humour. But he saw a girl smiling at him from across the room and immediately the pale Roman shapes around him receded into decent, humble perspective. She was a young English girl, with blonde hair and a healthy, pretty English face, and she smiled at him again with an invitation he understood, that denied the flesh even in the act of tendering it.

“There’s a quick trick or else I don’t know bridge,” said Collis. Dick got up and walked to her across the room.

“Won’t you dance?”

The middle-aged Englishman with whom she was sitting said, almost apologetically: “I’m going out soon.”

Sobered by excitement, Dick danced. He found in the girl a suggestion of all the pleasanter English things ; the story of safe gardens ringed around by the sea was implicit in her bright voice and, as he leaned back to look at her, he meant what he said to her so sincerely that his voice trembled. When her current escort should leave, she promised to come and sit with them. The Englishman accepted her return with repeated apologies and smiles.

Back at his table Dick ordered another bottle of spumante.

“She looks like somebody in the movies,” he said. “I can’t think who.” He glanced impatiently over his shoulder. “Wonder what’s keeping her?”

“I’d like to get in the movies,” said Collis thoughtfully. “I’m supposed to go into my father’s business but it doesn’t appeal to me much. Sit in an office in Atlanta for twenty years –”

His voice resisted the pressure of materialistic civilization.

“Too good for it?” suggested Dick.

“No, I don’t mean that.”

“Yes, you do.”

“How do you know what I mean? Why don’t you practise as a doctor, if you like to work so much?”

Dick had made them both wretched by this time, but simultaneously they had become vague with drink and in a moment they forgot; Collis left, and they shook hands warmly.

“Think it over,” said Dick sagely.

“Think what over?”

“You know.” It had been something about Collis going into his father’s business—good sound advice.

Clay walked off into space. Dick finished his bottle and then danced with the

English girl again, conquering his unwilling body with bold revolutions and stern determined marches down the floor. The most remarkable thing suddenly happened. He was dancing with the girl, the music stopped—and she had disappeared.

“Have you seen her?”

“Seen who?”

“The girl I was dancing with. Su’nly disappeared. Must be in the building.”

“No! No! That’s the ladies’ room.”

He stood up by the bar. There were two other men there, but he could think of no way of starting a conversation. He could have told them all about Rome and the violent origins of the Colonna and Gaetani families, but he realized that as a beginning that would be somewhat abrupt. A row of Yenci dolls on the cigar counter fell suddenly to the floor; there was a subsequent confusion and he had a sense of having been the cause of it, so he went back to the cabaret and drank a cup of black coffee. Collis was gone and the English girl was gone and there seemed nothing to do but go back to the hotel and lie down with his black heart. He paid his check and got his hat and coat.

There was dirty water in the gutters and between the rough cobblestones; a marshy vapour from the Campagna, a sweat of exhausted cultures tainted the morning air. A quartet of taxi-drivers, their little eyes bobbing in dark pouches, surrounded him. One who leaned insistently in his face he pushed harshly away.

“Quanto al Hotel Quirinal?”

“Cento lire.”

Six dollars. He shook his head and offered thirty lire, which was twice the day-time fare, but they shrugged their shoulders as one pair, and moved off.

“Trenta-cinque lire e mancie,” he said firmly.

“Cento lire.”

He broke into English.

“To go half a mile? You’ll take me for forty lire.”

“Oh, no.”

He was very tired. He pulled open the door of a cab and got in.

“Hotel Quirinal!” he said to the driver who stood obstinately outside the window. “Wipe that sneer off your face and take me to the Quirinal.”

“Ah, no.”

Dick got out. By the door of the Bonbonieri someone was arguing with the taxi-drivers, someone who now tried to explain their attitude to Dick; again one of the men pressed:lose, insisting and gesticulating, and Dick shoved him away.

“I want to go the Quirinal Hotel.”

“He says wan huner lire,” explained the interpreter.

“I understand. I’ll give him fif’y lire. Go on away.” This last to the insistent man who had edged up once more. The man looked at him and spat contemptuously.

The passionate impatience of the week leaped up in Dick and clothed itself like a flash in violence, the honourable, the traditional resource of his land ; he stepped forward and clapped the man’s face.

They surged about him, threatening, waving their arms, trying ineffectually to close in on him—with his back against the wall Dick hit out clumsily, laughing a little, and for a few minutes the mock fight, an affair of foiled rushes and padded, glancing blows, swayed back and forth in front of the door. Then Dick tripped and fell; he was hurt somewhere but he struggled up again, wrestling in arms that suddenly broke apart. There was a new voice and a new argument, but he leaned against the wall, panting and furious at the indignity of his position. He saw there was no sympathy for him, but he was unable to believe that he was wrong.

They were going to the police station and settle it there. His hat was retrieved and handed to him, and with someone holding his arm lightly he strode around the corner with the taxi-men and entered a bare barrack where carabinieri lounged under a single dim light.

At a desk sat a captain, to whom the officious individual who had stopped the battle spoke at length in Italian, at times pointing at Dick and letting himself be interrupted by the taxi-men, who delivered short bursts of invective and denunciation. The captain began to nod impatiently. He held up his hand and the hydra-headed address, with a few parting exclamations, died away. Then he turned to Dick.

“Spick Italiano?” he asked.

“No.”

“Spick Francais?”

“Oui,” said Dick, glowering.

“Alors. Ecoute. Va au Quirinal. Espece d’endormi. Ecoule: vous etes saoul. Payez ce que le chauffeur demande. Comprenez-vous?”

Diver shook his head.

“Non, je ne veux pas.”

“Come?”

“Je paierai quarante lires. C’est bien assez.”

The captain stood up.

“Ecoute,” he cried portentously. “Vous etes saoul. Vous avez battu le chauffeur. Comme ci, comme ca.” He struck the air excitedly with right hand and left. “C’est bon que je vous donne la liberte. Payez ce qu’il a dit—cento lire. Va au Quirinal.”

Raging with humiliation, Dick stared back at him.

“All right.” He turned blindly to the door—before him, leering and nodding, was the man who had brought him to the police station. “I’ll go home,” he shouted, “but first I’ll fix this baby.”

He walked past the staring carabinieri and up to the grinning face, hit it with a smashing left beside the jaw. The man dropped to the floor.

For a moment he stood over him in savage triumph—but even as a first pang of doubt shot through him the world reeled ; he was clubbed down, and fists and boots beat on him in a savage tattoo. He felt his nose break like a shingle and his eyes jerk as if they had snapped back on a rubber band into his head. A rib splintered under a stamping heel. Momentarily he lost consciousness, regained it as he was raised to a sitting position and his wrists jerked together with handcuffs. He struggled automatically. The plainclothes' lieutenant whom he had knocked down stood dabbing his jaw with a handkerchief and looking into it for blood ; he came over to Dick, poised himself, drew back his arm and smashed him to the floor.

When Doctor Diver lay quite still a pail of water was sloshed over him. One of his eyes opened dimly as he was being dragged along by the wrists through a bloody haze, and he made out the human and ghastly face of one of the taxi-drivers.

“Go to the Excelsior Hotel,” he cried faintly. “Tell Miss Warren. Two hundred lire! Miss Warren. Due centi lire! Oh, you dirty—you God—”

Still he was dragged along through the bloody haze, choking and sobbing, over vague irregular surfaces into some small place where he was dropped upon a stone floor. The men went out, a door clanged, he was alone.

XXIII

UNTIL ONE O’CLOCK BABY WARREN lay in bed, reading one of Marion Crawford’s curiously inanimate Roman stories ; then she went to a window and looked down into the street. Across from the hotel two carabinieri, grotesque in swaddling capes and harlequin hats, swung voluminously from this side and that, like mains’ls coming about, and watching them she thought of the Guards officer who had stared at her so intensely at lunch. He had possessed the arrogance of a tall member of a short race, with no obligation save to be tall. Had he come up to her and said: “Let’s go along, you and I,” she would have answered: “Why not?”—at least it seemed so now, for she was still disembodied by an unfamiliar background.

Her thoughts drifted back slowly through the guardsman to the two carabinieri, to Dick—she got into bed and turned out the light.

A little before four she was awakened by a brusque knocking.

“Yes—what is it?”

“It’s the concierge, Madame.”

She pulled on her kimono and faced him sleepily.

“Your friend name Deever he’s in a trouble. He had trouble with the police, and they have him in the jail. He sent a taxi up to tell, the driver says that he promised him two hundred lire.” He paused cautiously for this to be approved. “The driver says Mr Deever in the bad trouble. He had a fight with the police and is terribly bad hurt.”

“I’ll be right down.”

She dressed to an accompaniment of anxious heartbeats and ten minutes later stepped out of the elevator into the dark lobby. The chauffeur who brought the message was gone: the concierge hailed another one and told him the location of the jail. As they rode, the darkness lifted and thinned outside and Baby’s nerves, scarcely awake, cringed faintly at the unstable balance between night and day. She began to race against the day; sometimes on the broad avenues she gained, but whenever the thing that was pushing up paused for a moment, gusts of wind blew here and there impatiently and the slow creep of light began once more. The cab went past a loud fountain splashing in a voluminous shadow, turned into an alley so curved that the buildings were warped and strained following it, bumped and rattled over cobblestones, and stopped with a jerk where two sentry boxes were bright against a wall of green damp. Suddenly from the violet darkness of an archway came Dick’s voice, shouting and screaming.

“Are there any English? Are there any Americans? Are there any English? Are there any—oh, my God! You dirty Wops!”

His voice died away and she heard a dull sound of beating on the door. Then the voice began again.

“Are there any Americans? Are there any English?”

Following the voice she ran through the arch into a court, whirled about in momentary confusion, and located the small guard-room whence the cries came. Two carabinieri started to their feet, but Baby brushed past them to the door of the cell.

“Dick!” she called. “What’s the trouble?”

“They’ve put out my eye,” he cried. “They handcuffed me and then they beat me, the goddamn—the—”

Flashing around Baby took a step toward the two carabinieri.

“What have you done to him?” she whispered so fiercely that they flinched before her gathering fury.

“Non capisco inglese.”

In French she execrated them ; her wild, confident rage filled the room, enveloped them until they shrank and wriggled from the garments of blame with which she invested them. “Do something! Do something!”

“We can do nothing until we are ordered.”

“Bene. Bay-nay! Bene!”

Once more Baby let her passion scorch around them until they sweated out apologies for their impotence, looking at each other with the sense that something had after all gone terribly wrong. Baby went to the cell door, leaned against it, almost caressing it, as if that could make Dick feel her presence and power, and cried: “I’m going to the Embassy, I’ll be back.” Throwing a last glance of infinite menace at the carabinieri she ran out.

She drove to the American Embassy, where she paid off the taxi-driver upon his insistence. It was still dark when she ran up the steps and pressed the bell. She had pressed it three times before a sleepy English porter opened the door to her.

“I want to see someone,” she said. “Anyone—but right away.”

“No one’s awake, Madame. We don’t open until nine o’clock.”

Impatiently she waved the hour away.

“This is important. A man—an American has been terribly beaten. He’s in an Italian jail.”

“No one’s awake now. At nine o’clock —”

“I can’t wait. They’ve put out a man’s eye—my brother-in-law, and they won’t let him out of jail. I must talk to someone—can’t you see? Are you crazy? Are you an idiot, you stand there with that look in your face?”

“Hime unable to do anything, Madame.”

“You’ve got to wake someone up!” She seized him by the shoulders and jerked him violently. “It’s a matter of life and death. If you won’t wake someone a terrible thing will happen to you—”

“Kindly don’t lay hands on me, Madame.”

From above and behind the porter floated down a weary Groton voice.

“What is it there?”

The porter answered with relief.

“It’s a lady, sir, and she has shook me.” He had stepped back to speak and Baby pushed forward into the hall. On an upper landing, just aroused from sleep and wrapped in a white embroidered Persian robe, stood a singular young man. His face was of a monstrous and unnatural pink, vivid yet dead, and over his mouth was fastened what appeared to be a gag. When he saw Baby he moved his head back into a shadow.

“What is it?” he repeated.

Baby told him, in her agitation edging forward to the stairs. In the course of her story she realized that the gag was in reality a moustache bandage and that the man’s face was covered with pink cold cream, but the fact fitted quietly into the nightmare. The thing to do, she cried passionately, was for him to come to the jail with her at once and get Dick out.

“It’s a bad business,” he said.

“Yes,” she agreed conciliatingly. “Yes?”

“This trying to fight the police.” A note of personal affront crept into his voice. “I’m afraid there’s nothing to be done until nine o’clock.”

“Till nine o’clock,” she repeated aghast. “But you can do something, certainly! You can come to the jail with me and see that they don’t hurt him any more.”

“We aren’t permitted to do anything like that. The Consulate handles these things. The Consulate will be open at nine.”

His face, constrained to impassivity by the binding strap, infuriated Baby.

“I can’t wait until nine. My brother-in-law says they’ve put his eye out—he’s seriously hurt! I have to get to him. I have to find a doctor.” She let herself go and began to cry angrily as she talked, for she knew that he would respond to her agitation rather than her words. “You’ve got to do something about this. It’s your business, to protect American citizens in trouble.”

But he was of the Eastern seaboard and too hard for her. Shaking his head patiently at her failure to understand his position he drew the Persian robe closer about him and came down a few steps.

“Write down the address of the Consulate for this lady,” he said to the porter, “and look up Doctor Colazzo’s address and telephone number and write that down too.” He turned to Baby, with the expression of an exasperated Christ. “My dear lady, the diplomatic corps represents the Government of the United States to the Government of Italy. It has nothing to do with the protection of citizens, except under specific instructions from the State Department. Your brother-in-law has broken the laws of this country and has been put in jail, just as an Italian might be put in jail in New York. The only people who can let him go arc the Italian courts, and if your brother-in-law has a case you can get aid and advice from the Consulate, which protects the rights of American citizens. The Consulate does not open until nine o’clock. Even if it were my brother I couldn’t do anything —”

“Can you phone the Consulate?” she broke in.

“We can’t interfere with the Consulate. When the Consul gets there at nine—”

“Can you give me his home address?”

After a fractional pause the man shook his head. He took the memorandum from the porter and gave it to her.

“Now I’ll ask you to excuse me.”

He had manoeuvred her to the door: for an instant the violet dawn fell shrilly upon his pink mask and upon the linen sack that supported his moustache; then Baby was standing on the front steps alone. She had been in the embassy ten minutes.

The piazza whereon it faced was empty save for an old man gathering cigarette butts with a spiked stick. Baby caught a taxi presently and went to the Consulate, but there was no one there save a trio of wretched women scrubbing the stairs. She could not make them understand that she wanted the Consul’s home address—in a sudden resurgence of anxiety she rushed out and told the chauffeur to take her to the jail. He did not know where it was, but by the use of the words semper dritte, dextra and sinestra she manoeuvred him to its approximate locality, where she dismounted and explored a labyrinth of familiar alleys. But the buildings and the alleys all looked alike. Emerging from one trail into the Piazzo d’Espagna she saw the American Express Company and her heart lifted at the word “American” on the sign. There was a light in the window and hurrying across the square she tried the door, but it was locked and inside the clock stood at seven. Then she thought of Collis Clay.

She remembered the name of his hotel, a stuffy villa sealed in red plush across from the Excelsior. The woman on duty at the office was not disposed to help her —she had no authority to disturb Mr Clay and refused to let Miss Warren go up to his room alone ; convinced finally that this was not an affair of passion she accompanied her.

Collis lay naked upon his bed. He had come in tight and, awakening, it took him some moments to realize his nudity. He atoned for it by an excess of modesty. Taking his clothes into the bathroom he dressed in haste, muttering to himself, “Gosh. She certainly musta got a good look at me.” After some telephoning he and Baby found the jail and went to it.

The cell door was open and Dick was slumped on a chair in the guard-room. The carabiniere had washed some of the blood from his face, brushed him, and set his hat concealingly upon his head. Baby stood in the door trembling.

“Mr Clay will stay with you,” she said. “I want to get the Consul and a doctor.”

“All right.”

“Just stay quiet.”

“All right.”

“I’ll be back.”

She drove to the Consulate ; it was after eight now, and she was permitted to sit in the ante-room. Toward nine the Consul came in and Baby, hysterical with impotence and exhaustion, repeated her story. The Consul was disturbed. He warned her against getting into brawls in strange cities, but he was chiefly concerned that she should wait outside—with despair she read in his elderly eye that he wanted to be mixed up as little as possible in this catastrophe. Waiting on his action she passed the minutes by phoning a doctor to go to Dick. There were other people in the ante-room and several were admitted to the Consul’s office. After half an hour she chose the moment of someone’s coming out and pushed past the secretary into the room.

“This is outrageous! An American has been beaten half to death and thrown into prison and you make no move to help.”

“Just a minute. Mrs—”

“I’ve waited long enough. You come right down to the jail and get him out!”

“Mrs—”

“We’re people of considerable standing in America—” Her mouth hardened as she continued. “If it wasn’t for the scandal we can—I shall see that your indifference to this matter is reported in the proper quarter. If my brother-in-law were a British citizen he’d have been free hours ago, but you’re more concerned with what the police will think than about what you’re here for.”

“Mrs—”

“You put on your hat and come with me right away.”

The mention of his hat alarmed the Consul, who began to clean his spectacles hurriedly and to ruffle his papers. This proved of no avail: the American Woman, aroused, stood over him; the clean-sweeping irrational temper that had broken the moral back of a race and made a nursery out of a comment, was too much for him. He rang for the vice-consul—Baby had won.

Dick sat in the sunshine that fell profusely through the guard-room window. Collis was with him and two carabinieri, and they were waiting for something to happen. With the narrowed vision of his one eye Dick could see the carabinieri ; they were Tuscan peasants with short upper lips and he found it difficult to associate them with the brutality of last night. He sent one of them to fetch him a glass of beer.

The beer made him light-headed and the episode was momentarily illumined by a ray of sardonic humour. Collis was under the impression that the English girl had something to do with the catastrophe, but Dick was sure she had disappeared long before it happened. Collis was still absorbed by the fact that Miss Warren had found him naked on his bed.

Dick’s rage had retreated into him a little and he felt a vast criminal irresponsibility. What had happened to him was so awful that nothing could make any difference unless he could choke it to death, and, as this was unlikely, he was hopeless. He would be a different person henceforward, and in his raw state he had bizarre feelings of what the new self would be. The matter had about it the impersonal quality of an act of God. No mature Aryan is able to profit by a humiliation ; when he forgives, it has become part of his life, he has identified himself with the thing which has humiliated him—an upshot that in this case was impossible.

When Collis spoke of retribution, Dick shook his head and was silent. A lieutenant of carabinieri, pressed, burnished, vital, came into the room like three men and the guards jumped to attention. He seized the empty beer bottle and directed a stream of scolding at his men. The new spirit was in him, and the first thing was to get the beer bottle out of the guard-room. Dick looked at Collis and laughed.

The vice-consul, an overworked young man named Swan-son, arrived, and they started to the court; Collis and Swanson on either side of Dick and the two carabinieri close behind. It was a yellow, hazy morning; the squares and arcades were crowded and Dick, pulling his hat low over his head, walked fast, setting the pace, until one of the short-legged carabinieri ran alongside and protested. Swanson arranged matters.

“I’ve disgraced you, haven’t I?” said Dick, jovially.

“You’re liable to get killed fighting Italians,” replied Swanson sheepishly. “They’ll probably let you go this time, but if you were an Italian you’d gel a couple of months in prison. And how!”

“Have you ever been in prison?”

Swanson laughed.

“I like him,” announced Dick to Clay. “He’s a very likeable young man and he gives people excellent advice, but I’ll bet he’s been to jail himself. Probably spent weeks at a time in jail.”

Swanson laughed.

“I mean you want to be careful. You don’t know how these people are.”

“Oh, I know how they are,” broke out Dick, irritably. “They’re god damn stinkers.” He turned around to the carabinieri: “Did you get that?”

“I’m leaving you here,” Swanson said quickly. “I told your sister-in-law I would —our lawyer will meet you upstairs in the court-room. You want to be careful.”

“Good-bye.” Dick shook hands politely. “Thank you very much. I feel you have a future—”

With another smile Swanson hurried away, resuming his official expression of disapproval.

Now they came into a courtyard on all four sides of which outer stairways mounted to the chambers above. As they crossed the flags a groaning, hissing, booing sound went up from the loiterers in the courtyard, voices full of fury and scorn. Dick stared about.

“What’s that?” he demanded, aghast.

One of the carabinieri spoke to a group of men and the sound died away.

They came into the court-room. A shabby Italian lawyer from the Consulate spoke at length to the judge while Dick and Collis waited aside. Someone who knew English turned from the window that gave on the yard and explained the sound that had accompanied their passage through. A native of Frascati had raped and slain a five-year-old child and was to be brought in that morning—the crowd had assumed it was Dick.

In a few minutes the lawyer told Dick that he was freed—the court considered him punished enough.

“Enough!” Dick cried. “Punished for what?”

“Come along,” said Collis. “You can’t do anything now.”

“But what did I do, except get into a fight with some taxi men?”

“They claim you went up to a detective as if you were going to shake hands with him and hit him—”

“That’s not true! I told him I was going to hit him—I didn’t know he was a detective.”

“You better go along,” urged the lawyer.

“Come along.” Collis took his arm and they descended the steps.

“I want to make a speech,” Dick cried. “I want to explain to these people how I raped a five-year-old girl. Maybe I did—”

“Come along.”

Baby was waiting with a doctor in a taxi-cab. Dick did not want to look at her and he disliked the doctor, whose stern manner revealed him as one of that least palpable of European types, the Latin moralist. Dick summed up his conception of the disaster, but no one had much to say. In his room in the Quirinal the doctor washed off the rest of the blood and the oily sweat, set his nose, his fractured ribs and fingers, disinfected the smaller wounds and put a hopeful dressing on the eye. Dick asked for a quarter of a grain of morphine, for he was still wide awake and full of nervous energy. With the morphine he fell asleep ; the doctor and Collis left and Baby waited with him until a woman could arrive from the English nursing home. It had been a hard night but she had the satisfaction of feeling that, whatever Dick’s previous record was, they now possessed a moral superiority over him for as long as he proved of any use.