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Introduction to the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition

Many people have asked me how I feel about the fact that *The Fountainhead* has been in print for twenty-five years. I cannot say that I feel anything in particular, except a kind of quiet satisfaction. In this respect, my attitude toward my writing is best expressed by a statement of Victor Hugo: "If a writer wrote merely for his time, I would have to break my pen and throw it away."

Certain writers, of whom I am one, do not live, think or write on the range of the moment. Novels, in the proper sense of the word, are not written to vanish in a month or a year. That most of them do, today, that they are written and published as if they were magazines, to fade as rapidly, is one of the sorriest aspects of today's literature, and one of the clearest indictments of its dominant esthetic philosophy: concrete-bound, journalistic Naturalism which has now reached its dead end in the inarticulate sounds of panic.

Longevity--predominantly, though not exclusively--is the prerogative of a literary school which is virtually non-existent today: Romanticism. This is not the place for a dissertation on the nature of Romantic fiction, so let me state--for the record and for the benefit of those college students who have never been allowed to discover it--only that Romanticism is the conceptual school of art. It deals, not with the random trivia of the day, but with the timeless, fundamental, universal problems and values of human existence. It does not record or photograph; it creates and projects. It is concerned--in the words of Aristotle--not with things as they are, but with things as they might be and ought to be.

And for the benefit of those who consider relevance to one's own time as of crucial importance, I will add, in regard to our age, that never has there been a time when men have so desperately needed a projection of things as they ought to be.

I do not mean to imply that I knew, when I wrote it, that *The Fountainhead* would remain in print for twenty-five years. I did not think of any specific time period. I knew only that it was a book that ought to live. It did.

But that I knew it over twenty-five years ago--that I knew it while *The*

Fountainhead was being rejected by twelve publishers, some of whom declared that it was "too intellectual,"

"too controversial" and would not sell because no audience existed for it--that was the difficult part of its history; difficult for me to bear. I mention it here for the sake of any other writer of my kind who might have to face the same battle--as a reminder of the fact that it can be done.

It would be impossible for me to discuss *The Fountainhead* or any part of its history without mentioning the man who made it possible for me to write it: my husband, Frank O'Connor.

In a play I wrote in my early thirties, *Ideal*, the heroine, a screen star, speaks for me when she says: "I want to see, real, living, and in the hours of my own days, that glory I create as an illusion. I want it real. I want to know that there is someone, somewhere, who wants it, too. Or else what is the use of seeing it, and working, and burning oneself for an impossible vision? A spirit, too, needs fuel. It can run dry."

Frank was the fuel. He gave me, in the hours of my own days, the reality of that sense of life, which created *The Fountainhead*--and he helped me to maintain it over a long span of years when there was nothing around us but a gray desert of people and events that evoked nothing but contempt and revulsion. The essence of the bond between us is the fact that neither of us has ever wanted or been tempted to settle for anything less than the world presented in *The Fountainhead*. We never will.

If there is in me any touch of the Naturalistic writer who records "real-life" dialogue for use in a novel, it has been exercised only in regard to Frank. For instance, one of the most effective lines in *The Fountainhead* comes at the end of Part II, when, in reply to Toohey's question: "Why don't you tell me what you think of me?" Roark answers: "But I don't think of you." That line was Frank's answer to a different type of person, in a somewhat similar context. "You're casting pearls without getting even a pork chop in return," was said by Frank to me, in regard to my professional position. I gave that line to Dominique at Roark's trial.

I did not feel discouragement very often, and when I did, it did not last longer than overnight. But there was one evening, during the writing of *The Fountainhead*, when I felt so profound an indignation at the state of "things as they are" that it seemed as if I would never regain the energy to move one step farther toward "things as they ought to be." Frank talked to me for hours, that night. He convinced me of why one cannot give up the world to those one despises. By the time he finished, my discouragement was gone; it never came back in so intense a form.

I had been opposed to the practice of dedicating books; I had held that a book is addressed to any reader who proves worthy of it. But, that night, I told Frank that I would dedicate *The Fountainhead* to him because he had saved it. And one of my happiest moments, about two years later, was given to me by the look on his face when he came home, one day, and saw the page-proofs of the book, headed by the page that stated in cold, clear, objective print: To Frank O'Connor.

I have been asked whether I have changed in these past twenty-five years. No, I am the same--only more so. Have my ideas changed? No, my fundamental convictions, my view of life and of man, have never changed, from as far back as I can remember, but my knowledge of their applications has grown, in scope and in precision. What is my present evaluation of *The Fountainhead*? I am as proud

of it as I was on the day when I finished writing it.

Was *The Fountainhead* written for the purpose of presenting my philosophy? Here, I shall quote from *The Goal of My Writing*, an address I gave at Lewis and Clark College, on October 1, 1963: "This is the motive and purpose of my writing; the projection of an ideal man. The portrayal of a moral ideal, as my ultimate literary goal, as an end in itself--to which any didactic, intellectual or philosophical values contained in a novel are only the means.

"Let me stress this: my purpose is not the philosophical enlightenment of my readers...My purpose, first cause and prime mover is the portrayal of Howard Roark [or the heroes of *Atlas Shrugged*] as an end in himself...

"I write--and read--for the sake of the story...My basic test for any story is: 'Would I want to meet these characters and observe these events in real life? Is this story an experience worth living through for its own sake? Is the pleasure of contemplating these characters an end in itself?'...

"Since my purpose is the presentation of an ideal man, I had to define and present the conditions which make him possible and which his existence requires. Since man's character is the product of his premises, I had to define and present the kinds of premises and values that create the character of an ideal man and motivate his actions; which means that I had to define and present a rational code of ethics. Since man acts among and deals with other men, I had to present the kind of social system that makes it possible for ideal men to exist and to function--a free, productive, rational system which demands and rewards the best in every man, and which is, obviously, laissez-faire capitalism.

"But neither politics nor ethics nor philosophy is an end in itself, neither in life nor in literature. Only Man is an end in himself."

Are there any substantial changes I would want to make in *The Fountainhead*? No--and, therefore, I have left its text untouched. I want it to stand as it was written. But there is one minor error and one possibly misleading sentence which I should like to clarify, so I shall mention them here.

The error is semantic: the use of the word "egotist" in Roark's courtroom speech, while actually the word should have been "egoist." The error was caused by my reliance on a dictionary which gave such misleading definitions of these two words that "egotist" seemed closer to the meaning I intended (*Webster's Daily Use Dictionary*, 1933). (Modern philosophers, however, are guiltier than lexicographers in regard to these two terms.)

The possibly misleading sentence is in Roark's speech: "From this simplest necessity to the highest religious abstraction, from the wheel to the skyscraper, everything we are and everything we have comes from a single attribute of man--the function of his reasoning mind."

This could be misinterpreted to mean an endorsement of religion or religious ideas. I remember hesitating over that sentence, when I wrote it, and deciding that Roark's and my atheism, as well as the overall spirit of the book, were so clearly established that no one would misunderstand it, particularly since I said that religious abstractions are the product of man's mind, not of supernatural revelation.

But an issue of this sort should not be left to implications. What I was referring to was not religion as such, but a special category of abstractions, the most exalted one, which, for centuries, had been the near-monopoly of religion: ethics--not the particular content of religious ethics, but the

abstraction "ethics," the realm of values, man's code of good and evil, with the emotional connotations of height, uplift, nobility, reverence, grandeur, which pertain to the realm of man's values, but which religion has arrogated to itself.

The same meaning and considerations were intended and are applicable to another passage of the book, a brief dialogue between Roark and Hopton Stoddard, which may be misunderstood if taken out of context:

"You're a profoundly religious man, Mr. Roark--in your own way. I can see that in your buildings.'

"That's true,' said Roark."

In the context of that scene, however, the meaning is clear: it is Roark's profound dedication to values, to the highest and best, to the ideal, that Stoddard is referring to (see his explanation of the nature of the proposed temple). The erection of the Stoddard Temple and the subsequent trial state the issue explicitly.

This leads me to a wider issue which is involved in every line of *The Fountainhead* and which has to be understood if one wants to understand the causes of its lasting appeal.

Religion's monopoly in the field of ethics has made it extremely difficult to communicate the emotional meaning and connotations of a rational view of life. Just as religion has preempted the field of ethics, turning morality against man, so it has usurped the highest moral concepts of our language, placing them outside this earth and beyond man's reach. "Exaltation" is usually taken to mean an emotional state evoked by contemplating the supernatural. "Worship" means the emotional experience of loyalty and dedication to something higher than man. "Reverence" means the emotion of a sacred respect, to be experienced on one's knees. "Sacred" means superior to and not-to-be-touched-by any concerns of man or of this earth. Etc.

But such concepts do name actual emotions, even though no supernatural dimension exists; and these emotions are experienced as uplifting or ennobling, without the self-abasement required by religious definitions. What, then, is their source or referent in reality? It is the entire emotional realm of man's dedication to a moral ideal. Yet apart from the man-degrading aspects introduced by religion, that emotional realm is left unidentified, without concepts, words or recognition.

It is this highest level of man's emotions that has to be redeemed from the murk of mysticism and redirected at its proper object: man.

It is in this sense, with this meaning and intention, that I would identify the sense of life dramatized in *The Fountainhead* as man-worship.

It is an emotion that a few--a very few--men experience consistently; some men experience it in rare, single sparks that flash and die without consequences; some do not know what I am talking about; some do and spend their lives as frantically virulent spark-extinguishers.

Do not confuse "man-worship" with the many attempts, not to emancipate morality from religion and bring it into the realm of reason, but to substitute a secular meaning for the worst, the most profoundly irrational elements of religion. For instance, there are all the variants of modern collectivism (communist, fascist, Nazi, etc.), which preserve the religious-altruist ethics in full and merely

substitute "society" for God as the beneficiary of man's self-immolation. There are the various schools of modern philosophy which, rejecting the law of identity, proclaim that reality is an indeterminate flux ruled by miracles and shaped by whims--not God's whims, but man's or "society's." These neo-mystics are not man-worshippers; they are merely the secularizers of as profound a hatred for man as that of their avowedly mystic predecessors.

A cruder variant of the same hatred is represented by those concrete-bound, "statistical" mentalities who--unable to grasp the meaning of man's volition--declare that man cannot be an object of worship, since they have never encountered any specimens of humanity who deserved it.

The man-worshippers, in my sense of the term, are those who see man's highest potential and strive to actualize it. The man-haters are those who regard man as a helpless, depraved, contemptible creature--and struggle never to let him discover otherwise. It is important here to remember that the only direct, introspective knowledge of man anyone possesses is of himself.

More specifically, the essential division between these two camps is: those dedicated to the exaltation of man's self-esteem and the sacredness of his happiness on earth--and those determined not to allow either to become possible. The majority of mankind spend their lives and psychological energy in the middle, swinging between these two, struggling not to allow the issue to be named. This does not change the nature of the issue.

Perhaps the best way to communicate The Fountainhead's sense of life is by means of the quotation which had stood at the head of my manuscript, but which I removed from the final, published book. With this opportunity to explain it, I am glad to bring it back.

I removed it, because of my profound disagreement with the philosophy of its author, Friedrich Nietzsche. Philosophically, Nietzsche is a mystic and an irrationalist. His metaphysics consists of a somewhat "Byronic" and mystically "malevolent" universe; his epistemology subordinates reason to "will," or feeling or instinct or blood or innate virtues of character. But, as a poet, he projects at times (not consistently) a magnificent feeling for man's greatness, expressed in emotional, not intellectual terms.

This is especially true of the quotation I had chosen. I could not endorse its literal meaning: it proclaims an indefensible tenet--psychological determinism. But if one takes it as a poetic projection of an emotional experience (and if, intellectually, one substitutes the concept of an acquired "basic premise" for the concept of an innate "fundamental certainty"), then that quotation communicates the inner state of an exalted self-esteem--and sums up the emotional consequences for which The Fountainhead provides the rational, philosophical base:

"It is not the works, but the belief which is here decisive and determines the order of rank--to employ once more an old religious formula with a new and deeper meaning,--it is some fundamental certainty which a noble soul has about itself, something which is not to be sought, is not to be found, and perhaps, also, is not to be lost.--The noble soul has reverence for itself.--" (Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil.)

This view of man has rarely been expressed in human history. Today, it is virtually non-existent. Yet this is the view with which--in various degrees of longing, wistfulness, passion and agonized confusion--the best of mankind's youth start out in life. It is not even a view, for most of them, but a foggy, groping, undefined sense made of raw pain and incommunicable happiness. It is a

sense of enormous expectation, the sense that one's life is important, that great achievements are within one's capacity, and that great things lie ahead.

It is not in the nature of man--nor of any living entity--to start out by giving up, by spitting in one's own face and damning existence; that requires a process of corruption whose rapidity differs from man to man. Some give up at the first touch of pressure; some sell out; some run down by imperceptible degrees and lose their fire, never knowing when or how they lost it. Then all of these vanish in the vast swamp of their elders who tell them persistently that maturity consists of abandoning one's mind; security, of abandoning one's values; practicality, of losing self-esteem. Yet a few hold on and move on, knowing that that fire is not to be betrayed, learning how to give it shape, purpose and reality. But whatever their future, at the dawn of their lives, men seek a noble vision of man's nature and of life's potential.

There are very few guideposts to find. The Fountainhead is one of them.

This is one of the cardinal reasons of The Fountainhead's lasting appeal: it is a confirmation of the spirit of youth, proclaiming man's glory, showing how much is possible.

It does not matter that only a few in each generation will grasp and achieve the full reality of man's proper stature--and that the rest will betray it. It is those few that move the world and give life its meaning--and it is those few that I have always sought to address. The rest are no concern of mine; it is not me or The Fountainhead that they will betray: it is their own souls.

AYN RAND New York, May 1968

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I offer my profound gratitude to the great profession of architecture and its heroes who have given us some of the highest expressions of man's genius, yet have remained unknown, undiscovered by the majority of men. And to the architects who gave me their generous assistance in the technical matters of this book.

No person or event in this story is intended as a reference to any real person or event. The titles of the newspaper columns were invented and used by me in

the first draft of this novel five years ago. They were not taken from and have no reference to any actual newspaper columns or features.

--AYN RAND March 10, 1943

Part One: PETER KEATING

1.

HOWARD ROARK laughed.

He stood naked at the edge of a cliff. The lake lay far below him. A frozen explosion of granite burst in flight to the sky over motionless water. The water seemed immovable, the stone--flowing. The stone had the stillness of one brief moment in battle when thrust meets thrust and the currents are held in a pause more dynamic than motion. The stone glowed, wet with sunrays.

The lake below was only a thin steel ring that cut the rocks in half. The rocks went on into the depth, unchanged. They began and ended in the sky. So that the world seemed suspended in space, an island floating on nothing, anchored to the feet of the man on the cliff.

His body leaned back against the sky. It was a body of long straight lines and angles, each curve broken into planes. He stood, rigid, his hands hanging at his sides, palms out. He felt his shoulder blades drawn tight together, the curve of his neck, and the weight of the blood in his hands. He felt the wind behind him, in the hollow of his spine. The wind waved his hair against the sky. His hair was neither blond nor red, but the exact color of ripe orange rind.

He laughed at the thing which had happened to him that morning and at the things which now lay ahead.

He knew that the days ahead would be difficult. There were questions to be faced and a plan of action to be prepared. He knew that he should think about it. He knew also that he would not think, because everything was clear to him already, because the plan had been set long ago, and because he wanted to laugh.

He tried to consider it. But he forgot. He was looking at the granite.

He did not laugh as his eyes stopped in awareness of the earth around him. His face was like a law of nature--a thing one could not question, alter or implore. It had high cheekbones over gaunt, hollow cheeks; gray eyes, cold and steady; a contemptuous mouth, shut tight, the mouth of an executioner or a saint.

He looked at the granite. To be cut, he thought, and made into walls. He looked at a tree. To be split and made into rafters. He looked at a streak of rust on the stone and thought of iron ore under the ground. To be melted and to emerge as girders against the sky.

These rocks, he thought, are here for me; waiting for the drill, the dynamite and my voice; waiting to be split, ripped, pounded, reborn; waiting for the shape my hands will give them.

Then he shook his head, because he remembered that morning and that there were

many things to be done. He stepped to the edge, raised his arms, and dived down into the sky below.

He cut straight across the lake to the shore ahead. He reached the rocks where he had left his clothes. He looked regretfully about him. For three years, ever since he had lived in Stanton, he had come here for his only relaxation, to swim, to rest, to think, to be alone and alive, whenever he could find one hour to spare, which had not been often. In his new freedom the first thing he had wanted to do was to come here, because he knew that he was coming for the last time. That morning he had been expelled from the Architectural School of the Stanton Institute of Technology. He pulled his clothes on: old denim trousers, sandals, a shirt with short sleeves and most of its buttons missing. He swung down a narrow trail among the boulders, to a path running through a green slope, to the road below.

He walked swiftly, with a loose, lazy expertness of motion. He walked down the long road, in the sun. Far ahead Stanton lay sprawled on the coast of Massachusetts, a little town as a setting for the gem of its existence--the great institute rising on a hill beyond.

The township of Stanton began with a dump. A gray mound of refuse rose in the grass. It smoked faintly. Tin cans glittered in the sun. The road led past the first houses to a church. The church was a Gothic monument of shingles painted pigeon blue. It had stout wooden buttresses supporting nothing. It had stained-glass windows with heavy traceries of imitation stone. It opened the way into long streets edged by tight, exhibitionist lawns. Behind the lawns stood wooden piles tortured out of all shape: twisted into gables, turrets, dormers; bulging with porches; crushed under huge, sloping roofs. White curtains floated at the windows. A garbage can stood at a side door, flowing over. An old Pekinese sat upon a cushion on a door step, its mouth drooling. A line of diapers fluttered in the wind between the columns of a porch.

People turned to look at Howard Roark as he passed. Some remained staring after him with sudden resentment. They could give no reason for it: it was an instinct his presence awakened in most people. Howard Roark saw no one. For him, the streets were empty. He could have walked there naked without concern. He crossed the heart of Stanton, a broad green edged by shop windows. The windows displayed new placards announcing:

WELCOME TO THE CLASS OF '22! GOOD LUCK, CLASS OF '22! The Class of '22 of the Stanton Institute of Technology was holding its commencement exercises that afternoon.

Roark swung into a side street, where at the end of a long row, on a knoll over a green ravine, stood the house of Mrs. Keating. He had boarded at that house for three years.

Mrs. Keating was out on the porch. She was feeding a couple of canaries in a cage suspended over the railing. Her pudgy little hand stopped in mid-air when she saw him. She watched him with curiosity. She tried to pull her mouth into a proper expression of sympathy; she succeeded only in betraying that the process was an effort.

He was crossing the porch without noticing her. She stopped him.

"Mr. Roark!"

"Yes?"

"Mr. Roark, I'm so sorry about--" she hesitated demurely, "--about what happened this morning."

"What?" he asked.

"Your being expelled from the Institute. I can't tell you how sorry I am. I only want you to know that I feel for you."

He stood looking at her. She knew that he did not see her. No, she thought, it was not that exactly. He always looked straight at people and his damnable eyes never missed a thing, it was only that he made people feel as if they did not exist. He just stood looking. He would not answer.

"But what I say," she continued, "is that if one suffers in this world, it's on account of error. Of course, you'll have to give up the architect profession now, won't you? But then a young man can always earn a decent living clerking or selling or something."

He turned to go.

"Oh, Mr. Roark!" she called.

"Yes?"

"The Dean phoned for you while you were out."

For once, she expected some emotion from him; and an emotion would be the equivalent of seeing him broken. She did not know what it was about him that had always made her want to see him broken.

"Yes?" he asked.

"The Dean," she repeated uncertainly, trying to recapture her effect. "The Dean himself through his secretary."

"Well?"

"She said to tell you that the Dean wanted to see you immediately the moment you got back."

"Thank you."

"What do you suppose he can want now?"

"I don't know."

He had said: "I don't know." She had heard distinctly: "I don't give a damn." She stared at him incredulously.

"By the way," she said, "Petey is graduating today." She said it without apparent relevance.

"Today? Oh, yes."

"It's a great day for me. When I think of how I skimmed and slaved to put my boy through school. Not that I'm complaining. I'm not one to complain. Petey's a brilliant boy."

She stood drawn up. Her stout little body was corseted so tightly under the

starched folds of her cotton dress that it seemed to squeeze the fat out to her wrists and ankles.

"But of course," she went on rapidly, with the eagerness of her favorite subject, "I'm not one to boast. Some mothers are lucky and others just aren't. We're all in our rightful place. You just watch Petey from now on. I'm not one to want my boy to kill himself with work and I'll thank the Lord for any small success that comes his way. But if that boy isn't the greatest architect of this U.S.A., his mother will want to know the reason why!"

He moved to go.

"But what am I doing, gabbing with you like that!" she said brightly. "You've got to hurry and change and run along. The Dean's waiting for you."

She stood looking after him through the screen door, watching his gaunt figure move across the rigid neatness of her parlor. He always made her uncomfortable in the house, with a vague feeling of apprehension, as if she were waiting to see him swing out suddenly and smash her coffee tables, her Chinese vases, her framed photographs. He had never shown any inclination to do so. She kept expecting it, without knowing why.

Roark went up the stairs to his room. It was a large, bare room, made luminous by the clean glow of whitewash. Mrs. Keating had never had the feeling that Roark really lived there. He had not added a single object to the bare necessities of furniture which she had provided; no pictures, no pennants, no cheering human touch. He had brought nothing to the room but his clothes and his drawings; there were few clothes and too many drawings; they were stacked high in one corner; sometimes she thought that the drawings lived there, not the man.

Roark walked now to these drawings; they were the first things to be packed. He lifted one of them, then the next, then another. He stood looking at the broad sheets.

They were sketches of buildings such as had never stood on the face of the earth. They were as the first houses built by the first man born, who had never heard of others building before him. There was nothing to be said of them, except that each structure was inevitably what it had to be. It was not as if the draftsman had sat over them, pondering laboriously, piecing together doors, windows and columns, as his whim dictated and as the books prescribed. It was as if the buildings had sprung from the earth and from some living force, complete, unalterably right. The hand that had made the sharp pencil lines still had much to learn. But not a line seemed superfluous, not a needed plane was missing. The structures were austere and simple, until one looked at them and realized what work, what complexity of method, what tension of thought had achieved the simplicity. No laws had dictated a single detail. The buildings were not Classical, they were not Gothic, they were not Renaissance. They were only Howard Roark.

He stopped, looking at a sketch. It was one that had never satisfied him. He had designed it as an exercise he had given himself, apart from his schoolwork; he did that often when he found some particular site and stopped before it to think of what building it should bear. He had spent nights staring at this sketch, wondering what he had missed. Glancing at it now, unprepared, he saw the mistake he had made.

He flung the sketch down on the table, he bent over it, he slashed lines straight through his neat drawing. He stopped once in a while and stood looking at it, his fingertips pressed to the paper; as if his hands held the building.

His hands had long fingers, hard veins, prominent joints and wristbones.

An hour later he heard a knock at his door.

"Come in!" he snapped, without stopping.

"Mr. Roark!" gasped Mrs. Keating, staring at him from the threshold. "What on earth are you doing?"

He turned and looked at her, trying to remember who she was.

"How about the Dean?" she moaned. "The Dean that's waiting for you?"

"Oh," said Roark. "Oh, yes. I forgot."

"You...forgot?"

"Yes." There was a note of wonder in his voice, astonished by her astonishment.

"Well, all I can say," she choked, "is that it serves you right! It just serves you right. And with the commencement beginning at four-thirty, how do you expect him to have time to see you?"

"I'll go at once, Mrs. Keating."

It was not her curiosity alone that prompted her to action; it was a secret fear that the sentence of the Board might be revoked. He went to the bathroom at the end of the hall; she watched him washing his hands, throwing his loose, straight hair back into a semblance of order. He came out again, he was on his way to the stairs before she realized that he was leaving.

"Mr. Roark!" she gasped, pointing at his clothes. "You're not going like this?"

"Why not?"

"But it's your Dean!"

"Not any more, Mrs. Keating."

She thought, aghast, that he said it as if he were actually happy.

The Stanton Institute of Technology stood on a hill, its crenelated walls raised as a crown over the city stretched below. It looked like a medieval fortress, with a Gothic cathedral grafted to its belly. The fortress was eminently suited to its purpose, with stout, brick walls, a few slits wide enough for sentries, ramparts behind which defending archers could hide, and corner turrets from which boiling oil could be poured upon the attacker--should such an emergency arise in an institute of learning. The cathedral rose over it in lace splendor, a fragile defense against two great enemies: light and air.

The Dean's office looked like a chapel, a pool of dreamy twilight fed by one tall window of stained glass. The twilight flowed in through the garments of stiff saints, their arms contorted at the elbows. A red spot of light and a purple one rested respectively upon two genuine gargoyles squatting at the corners of a fireplace that had never been used. A green spot stood in the center of a picture of the Parthenon, suspended over the fireplace.

When Roark entered the office, the outlines of the Dean's figure swam dimly behind his desk, which was carved like a confessional. He was a short, plumpish

gentleman whose spreading flesh was held in check by an indomitable dignity.

"Ah, yes, Roark," he smiled. "Do sit down, please."

Roark sat down. The Dean entwined his fingers on his stomach and waited for the plea he expected. No plea came. The Dean cleared his throat.

"It will be unnecessary for me to express my regret at the unfortunate event of this morning," he began, "since I take it for granted that you have always known my sincere interest in your welfare."

"Quite unnecessary," said Roark.

The Dean looked at him dubiously, but continued:

"Needless to say, I did not vote against you. I abstained entirely. But you may be glad to know that you had quite a determined little group of defenders at the meeting. Small, but determined. Your professor of structural engineering acted quite the crusader on your behalf. So did your professor of mathematics. Unfortunately, those who felt it their duty to vote for your expulsion quite outnumbered the others. Professor Peterkin, your critic of design, made an issue of the matter. He went so far as to threaten us with his resignation unless you were expelled. You must realize that you have given Professor Peterkin great provocation."

"I do," said Roark.

"That, you see, was the trouble. I am speaking of your attitude towards the subject of architectural design. You have never given it the attention it deserves. And yet, you have been excellent in all the engineering sciences. Of course, no one denies the importance of structural engineering to a future architect, but why go to extremes? Why neglect what may be termed the artistic and inspirational side of your profession and concentrate on all those dry, technical, mathematical subjects? You intended to become an architect, not a civil engineer."

"Isn't this superfluous?" Roark asked. "It's past. There's no point in discussing my choice of subjects now."

"I am endeavoring to be helpful, Roark. You must be fair about this. You cannot say that you were not given many warnings before this happened."

"I was."

The Dean moved in his chair. Roark made him uncomfortable. Roark's eyes were fixed on him politely. The Dean thought, there's nothing wrong with the way he's looking at me, in fact it's quite correct, most properly attentive; only, it's as if I were not here.

"Every problem you were given," the Dean went on, "every project you had to design--what did you do with it? Every one of them done in that--well, I cannot call it a style--in that incredible manner of yours. It is contrary to every principle we have tried to teach you, contrary to all established precedents and traditions of Art. You may think you are what is called a modernist, but it isn't even that. It is...it is sheer insanity, if you don't mind."

"I don't mind."

"When you were given projects that left the choice of style up to you and you

turned in one of your wild stunts--well, frankly, your teachers passed you because they did not know what to make of it. But, when you were given an exercise in the historical styles, a Tudor chapel or a French opera house to design--and you turned in something that looked like a lot of boxes piled together without rhyme or reason--would you say it was an answer to an assignment or plain insubordination?"

"It was insubordination," said Roark.

"We wanted to give you a chance--in view of your brilliant record in all other subjects. But when you turn in this--" the Dean slammed his fist down on a sheet spread before him--"this as a Renaissance villa for your final project of the year--really, my boy, it was too much!"

The sheet bore a drawing--a house of glass and concrete. In the corner there was a sharp, angular signature: Howard Roark.

"How do you expect us to pass you after this?"

"I don't."

"You left us no choice in the matter. Naturally, you would feel bitterness toward us at this moment, but..."

"I feel nothing of the kind," said Roark quietly. "I owe you an apology. I don't usually let things happen to me. I made a mistake this time. I shouldn't have waited for you to throw me out. I should have left long ago."

"Now, now, don't get discouraged. This is not the right attitude to take. Particularly in view of what I am going to tell you."

The Dean smiled and leaned forward confidentially, enjoying the overture to a good deed.

"Here is the real purpose of our interview. I was anxious to let you know as soon as possible. I did not wish to leave you disheartened. Oh, I did, personally, take a chance with the President's temper when I mentioned this to him, but...Mind you, he did not commit himself, but...Here is how things stand: now that you realize how serious it is, if you take a year off, to rest, to think it over--shall we say to grow up?--there might be a chance of our taking you back. Mind you, I cannot promise anything--this is strictly unofficial--it would be most unusual, but in view of the circumstances and of your brilliant record, there might be a very good chance."

Roark smiled. It was not a happy smile, it was not a grateful one. It was a simple, easy smile and it was amused.

"I don't think you understood me," said Roark. "What made you suppose that I want to come back?"

"Eh?"

"I won't be back. I have nothing further to learn here."

"I don't understand you," said the Dean stiffly.

"Is there any point in explaining? It's of no interest to you any longer."

"You will kindly explain yourself."

"If you wish. I want to be an architect, not an archeologist. I see no purpose in doing Renaissance villas. Why learn to design them, when I'll never build them?"

"My dear boy, the great style of the Renaissance is far from dead. Houses of that style are being erected every day."

"They are. And they will be. But not by me."

"Come, come, now, this is childish."

"I came here to learn about building. When I was given a project, its only value to me was to learn to solve it as I would solve a real one in the future. I did them the way I'll build them. I've learned all I could learn here--in the structural sciences of which you don't approve. One more year of drawing Italian post cards would give me nothing."

An hour ago the Dean had wished that this interview would proceed as calmly as possible. Now he wished that Roark would display some emotion; it seemed unnatural for him to be so quietly natural in the circumstances.

"Do you mean to tell me that you're thinking seriously of building that way, when and if you are an architect?"

"Yes."

"My dear fellow, who will let you?"

"That's not the point. The point is, who will stop me?"

"Look here, this is serious. I am sorry that I haven't had a long, earnest talk with you much earlier...I know, I know, I know, don't interrupt me, you've seen a modernistic building or two, and it gave you ideas. But do you realize what a passing fancy that whole so-called modern movement is? You must learn to understand--and it has been proved by all authorities--that everything beautiful in architecture has been done already. There is a treasure mine in every style of the past. We can only choose from the great masters. Who are we to improve upon them? We can only attempt, respectfully, to repeat."

"Why?" asked Howard Roark.

No, thought the Dean, no, he hasn't said anything else; it's a perfectly innocent word; he's not threatening me.

"But it's self-evident!" said the Dean.

"Look," said Roark evenly, and pointed at the window. "Can you see the campus and the town? Do you see how many men are walking and living down there? Well, I don't give a damn what any or all of them think about architecture--or about anything else, for that matter. Why should I consider what their grandfathers thought of it?"

"That is our sacred tradition."

"Why?"

"For heaven's sake, can't you stop being so naive about it?"

"But I don't understand. Why do you want me to think that this is great architecture?" He pointed to the picture of the Parthenon.

"That," said the Dean, "is the Parthenon."

"So it is."

"I haven't the time to waste on silly questions."

"All right, then." Roark got up, he took a long ruler from the desk, he walked to the picture. "Shall I tell you what's rotten about it?"

"It's the Parthenon!" said the Dean.

"Yes, God damn it, the Parthenon!"

The ruler struck the glass over the picture.

"Look," said Roark. "The famous flutings on the famous columns--what are they there for? To hide the joints in wood--when columns were made of wood, only these aren't, they're marble. The triglyphs, what are they? Wood. Wooden beams, the way they had to be laid when people began to build wooden shacks. Your Greeks took marble and they made copies of their wooden structures out of it, because others had done it that way. Then your masters of the Renaissance came along and made copies in plaster of copies in marble of copies in wood. Now here we are, making copies in steel and concrete of copies in plaster of copies in marble of copies in wood. Why?"

The Dean sat watching him curiously. Something puzzled him, not in the words, but in Roark's manner of saying them.

"Rules?" said Roark. "Here are my rules: what can be done with one substance must never be done with another. No two materials are alike. No two sites on earth are alike. No two buildings have the same purpose. The purpose, the site, the material determine the shape. Nothing can be reasonable or beautiful unless it's made by one central idea, and the idea sets every detail. A building is alive, like a man. Its integrity is to follow its own truth, its one single theme, and to serve its own single purpose. A man doesn't borrow pieces of his body. A building doesn't borrow hunks of its soul. Its maker gives it the soul and every wall, window and stairway to express it."

"But all the proper forms of expression have been discovered long ago."

"Expression--of what? The Parthenon did not serve the same purpose as its wooden ancestor. An airline terminal does not serve the same purpose as the Parthenon. Every form has its own meaning. Every man creates his meaning and form and goal. Why is it so important--what others have done? Why does it become sacred by the mere fact of not being your own? Why is anyone and everyone right--so long as it's not yourself? Why does the number of those others take the place of truth? Why is truth made a mere matter of arithmetic--and only of addition at that? Why is everything twisted out of all sense to fit everything else? There must be some reason. I don't know. I've never known it. I'd like to understand."

"For heaven's sake," said the Dean. "Sit down....That's better....Would you mind very much putting that ruler down?...Thank you....Now listen to me. No one has ever denied the importance of modern technique to an architect. We must learn to adapt the beauty of the past to the needs of the present. The voice of the past is the voice of the people. Nothing has ever been invented by one man in architecture. The proper creative process is a slow, gradual, anonymous,

collective one, in which each man collaborates with all the others and subordinates himself to the standards of the majority."

"But you see," said Roark quietly, "I have, let's say, sixty years to live. Most of that time will be spent working. I've chosen the work I want to do. If I find no joy in it, then I'm only condemning myself to sixty years of torture. And I can find the joy only if I do my work in the best way possible to me. But the best is a matter of standards--and I set my own standards. I inherit nothing. I stand at the end of no tradition. I may, perhaps, stand at the beginning of one."

"How old are you?" asked the Dean.

"Twenty-two," said Roark.

"Quite excusable," said the Dean; he seemed relieved. "You'll outgrow all that." He smiled. "The old standards have lived for thousands of years and nobody has been able to improve upon them. What are your modernists? A transient mode, exhibitionists trying to attract attention. Have you observed the course of their careers? Can you name one who has achieved any permanent distinction? Look at Henry Cameron. A great man, a leading architect twenty years ago. What is he today? Lucky if he gets--once a year--a garage to remodel. A bum and a drunkard, who..."

"We won't discuss Henry Cameron."

"Oh? Is he a friend of yours?"

"No. But I've seen his buildings."

"And you found them..."

"I said we won't discuss Henry Cameron."

"Very well. You must realize that I am allowing you a great deal of...shall we say, latitude? I am not accustomed to hold a discussion with a student who behaves in your manner. However, I am anxious to forestall, if possible, what appears to be a tragedy, the spectacle of a young man of your obvious mental gifts setting out deliberately to make a mess of his life."

The Dean wondered why he had promised the professor of mathematics to do all he could for this boy. Merely because the professor had said: "This," and pointed to Roark's project, "is a great man." A great man, thought the Dean, or a criminal. The Dean winced. He did not approve of either.

He thought of what he had heard about Roark's past. Roark's father had been a steel puddler somewhere in Ohio and had died long ago. The boy's entrance papers showed no record of nearest relatives. When asked about it, Roark had said indifferently: "I don't think I have any relatives. I may have. I don't know." He had seemed astonished that he should be expected to have any interest in the matter. He had not made or sought a single friend on the campus. He had refused to join a fraternity. He had worked his way through high school and through the three years here at the Institute. He had worked as a common laborer in the building trades since childhood. He had done plastering, plumbing, steel work, anything he could get, going from one small town to another, working his way east, to the great cities. The Dean had seen him, last summer, on his vacation, catching rivets on a skyscraper in construction in Boston; his long body relaxed under greasy overalls, only his eyes intent, and his right arm swinging forward, once in a while, expertly, without effort, to catch the flying ball of fire at

the last moment, when it seemed that the hot rivet would miss the bucket and strike him in the face.

"Look here, Roark," said the Dean gently. "You have worked hard for your education. You had only one year left to go. There is something important to consider, particularly for a boy in your position. There's the practical side of an architect's career to think about. An architect is not an end in himself. He is only a small part of a great social whole. Co-operation is the key word to our modern world and to the profession of architecture in particular. Have you thought of your potential clients?"

"Yes," said Roark.

"The Client," said the Dean. "The Client. Think of that above all. He's the one to live in the house you build. Your only purpose is to serve him. You must aspire to give the proper artistic expression to his wishes. Isn't that all one can say on the subject?"

"Well, I could say that I must aspire to build for my client the most comfortable, the most logical, the most beautiful house that can be built. I could say that I must try to sell him the best I have and also teach him to know the best. I could say it, but I won't. Because I don't intend to build in order to serve or help anyone. I don't intend to build in order to have clients. I intend to have clients in order to build."

"How do you propose to force your ideas on them?"

"I don't propose to force or be forced. Those who want me will come to me."

Then the Dean understood what had puzzled him in Roark's manner.

"You know," he said, "you would sound much more convincing if you spoke as if you cared whether I agreed with you or not."

"That's true," said Roark. "I don't care whether you agree with me or not." He said it so simply that it did not sound offensive, it sounded like the statement of a fact which he noticed, puzzled, for the first time.

"You don't care what others think--which might be understandable. But you don't care even to make them think as you do?"

"No."

"But that's...that's monstrous."

"Is it? Probably. I couldn't say."

"I'm glad of this interview," said the Dean, suddenly, too loudly. "It has relieved my conscience. I believe, as others stated at the meeting, that the profession of architecture is not for you. I have tried to help you. Now I agree with the Board. You are a man not to be encouraged. You are dangerous."

"To whom?" asked Roark.

But the Dean rose, indicating that the interview was over.

Roark left the room. He walked slowly through the long halls, down the stairs, out to the lawn below. He had met many men such as the Dean; he had never understood them. He knew only that there was some important difference between

his actions and theirs. It had ceased to disturb him long ago. But he always looked for a central theme in buildings and he looked for a central impulse in men. He knew the source of his actions; he could not discover theirs. He did not care. He had never learned the process of thinking about other people. But he wondered, at times, what made them such as they were. He wondered again, thinking of the Dean. There was an important secret involved somewhere in that question, he thought. There was a principle which he must discover.

But he stopped. He saw the sunlight of late afternoon, held still in the moment before it was to fade, on the gray limestone of a stringcourse running along the brick wall of the Institute building. He forgot men, the Dean and the principle behind the Dean, which he wanted to discover. He thought only of how lovely the stone looked in the fragile light and of what he could have done with that stone.

He thought of a broad sheet of paper, and he saw, rising on the paper, bare walls of gray limestone with long bands of glass, admitting the glow of the sky into the classrooms. In the corner of the sheet stood a sharp, angular signature--HOWARD ROARK.

2.

"...ARCHITECTURE, my friends, is a great Art based on two cosmic principles: Beauty and Utility. In a broader sense, these are but part of the three eternal entities: Truth, Love and Beauty. Truth--to the traditions of our Art, Love--for our fellow men whom we are to serve, Beauty--ah, Beauty is a compelling goddess to all artists, be it in the shape of a lovely woman or a building....Hm....Yes....In conclusion, I should like to say to you, who are about to embark upon your careers in architecture, that you are now the custodians of a sacred heritage....Hm....Yes....So, go forth into the world, armed with the three eternal entities--armed with courage and vision, loyal to the standards this great school has represented for many years. May you all serve faithfully, neither as slaves to the past nor as those parvenus who preach originality for its own sake, which attitude is only ignorant vanity. May you all have many rich, active years before you and leave, as you depart from this world, your mark on the sands of time!"

Guy Francon ended with a flourish, raising his right arm in a sweeping salute; informal, but with an air, that gay, swaggering air which Guy Francon could always permit himself. The huge hall before him came to life in applause and approval.

A sea of faces, young, perspiring and eager, had been raised solemnly--for forty-five minutes--to the platform where Guy Francon had held forth as the speaker at the commencement exercises of the Stanton Institute of Technology, Guy Francon who had brought his own person from New York for the occasion; Guy Francon, of the illustrious firm of Francon & Heyer, vice-president of the Architects' Guild of America, member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, member of the National Fine Arts Commission, Secretary of the Arts and Crafts League of New York, chairman of the Society for Architectural Enlightenment of the U.S.A.; Guy Francon, knight of the Legion of Honor of France, decorated by the governments of Great Britain, Belgium, Monaco and Siam; Guy Francon, Stanton's greatest alumnus, who had designed the famous Frink National Bank Building of New York City, on the top of which, twenty-five floors above the pavements, there burned in a miniature replica of the Hadrian Mausoleum a wind-blown torch made of glass and the best General Electric bulbs.

Guy Francon descended from the platform, fully conscious of his timing and movements. He was of medium height and not too heavy, with just an unfortunate tendency to stoutness. Nobody, he knew, would give him his real age, which was fifty-one. His face bore not a wrinkle nor a single straight line; it was an artful composition in globes, circles, arcs and ellipses, with bright little eyes twinkling wittily. His clothes displayed an artist's infinite attention to details. He wished, as he descended the steps, that this were a co-educational school.

The hall before him, he thought, was a splendid specimen of architecture, made a bit stuffy today by the crowd and by the neglected problem of ventilation. But it boasted green marble dadoes, Corinthian columns of cast iron painted gold, and garlands of gilded fruit on the walls; the pineapples particularly, thought Guy Francon, had stood the test of years very well. It is, thought Guy Francon, touching; it was I who built this annex and this very hall, twenty years ago; and here I am.

The hall was packed with bodies and faces, so tightly that one could not distinguish at a glance which faces belonged to which bodies. It was like a soft, shivering aspic made of mixed arms, shoulders, chests and stomachs. One of the heads, pale, dark haired and beautiful, belonged to Peter Keating.

He sat, well in front, trying to keep his eyes on the platform, because he knew that many people were looking at him and would look at him later. He did not glance back, but the consciousness of those centered glances never left him. His eyes were dark, alert, intelligent. His mouth, a small upturned crescent faultlessly traced, was gentle and generous, and warm with the faint promise of a smile. His head had a certain classical perfection in the shape of the skull, in the natural wave of black ringlets about finely hollowed temples. He held his head in the manner of one who takes his beauty for granted, but knows that others do not. He was Peter Keating, star student of Stanton, president of the student body, captain of the track team, member of the most important fraternity, voted the most popular man on the campus.

The crowd was there, thought Peter Keating, to see him graduate, and he tried to estimate the capacity of the hall. They knew of his scholastic record and no one would beat his record today. Oh, well, there was Shlinker. Shlinker had given him stiff competition, but he had beaten Shlinker this last year. He had worked like a dog, because he had wanted to beat Shlinker. He had no rivals today....Then he felt suddenly as if something had fallen down, inside his throat, to his stomach, something cold and empty, a blank hole rolling down and leaving that feeling on its way: not a thought, just the hint of a question asking him whether he was really as great as this day would proclaim him to be. He looked for Shlinker in the crowd; he saw his yellow face and gold-rimmed glasses. He stared at Shlinker warmly, in relief, in reassurance, in gratitude. It was obvious that Shlinker could never hope to equal his own appearance or ability; he had nothing to doubt; he would always beat Shlinker and all the Shlinkers of the world; he would let no one achieve what he could not achieve. Let them all watch him. He would give them good reason to stare. He felt the hot breaths about him and the expectation, like a tonic. It was wonderful, thought Peter Keating, to be alive.

His head was beginning to reel a little. It was a pleasant feeling. The feeling carried him, unresisting and unremembering, to the platform in front of all those faces. He stood--slender, trim, athletic--and let the deluge break upon his head. He gathered from its roar that he had graduated with honors, that the Architects' Guild of America had presented him with a gold medal and that he had been awarded the Prix de Paris by the Society for Architectural Enlightenment of the U.S.A.--a four-year scholarship at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris.

Then he was shaking hands, scratching the perspiration off his face with the end of a rolled parchment, nodding, smiling, suffocating in his black gown and hoping that people would not notice his mother sobbing with her arms about him. The President of the Institute shook his hand, booming: "Stanton will be proud of you, my boy." The Dean shook his hand, repeating: "...a glorious future...a glorious future...a glorious future..." Professor Peterkin shook his hand, and patted his shoulder, saying: "...and you'll find it absolutely essential; for example, I had the experience when I built the Peabody Post Office..." Keating did not listen to the rest, because he had heard the story of the Peabody Post Office many times. It was the only structure anyone had ever known Professor Peterkin to have erected, before he sacrificed his practice to the responsibilities of teaching. A great deal was said about Keating's final project--a Palace of Fine Arts. For the life of him, Keating could not remember at the moment what that project was.

Through all this, his eyes held the vision of Guy Francon shaking his hand, and his ears held the sounds of Francon's mellow voice: "...as I have told you, it is still open, my boy. Of course, now that you have this scholarship...you will have to decide...a Beaux-Arts diploma is very important to a young man...but I should be delighted to have you in our office...."

The banquet of the Class of '22 was long and solemn. Keating listened to the speeches with interest; when he heard the endless sentences about "young men as the hope of American Architecture" and "the future opening its golden gates," he knew that he was the hope and his was the future, and it was pleasant to hear this confirmation from so many eminent lips. He looked at the gray-haired orators and thought of how much younger he would be when he reached their positions, theirs and beyond them.

Then he thought suddenly of Howard Roark. He was surprised to find that the flash of that name in his memory gave him a sharp little twinge of pleasure, before he could know why. Then he remembered: Howard Roark had been expelled this morning. He reproached himself silently; he made a determined effort to feel sorry. But the secret glow came back, whenever he thought of that expulsion. The event proved conclusively that he had been a fool to imagine Roark a dangerous rival; at one time, he had worried about Roark more than about Shlinker, even though Roark was two years younger and one class below him. If he had ever entertained any doubts on their respective gifts, hadn't this day settled it all? And, he remembered, Roark had been very nice to him, helping him whenever he was stuck on a problem...not stuck, really, just did not have the time to think it out, a plan or something. Christ! how Roark could untangle a plan, like pulling a string and it was open...well, what if he could? What did it get him? He was done for now. And knowing this, Peter Keating experienced at last a satisfying pang of sympathy for Howard Roark.

When Keating was called upon to speak, he rose confidently. He could not show that he was terrified. He had nothing to say about architecture. But he spoke, his head high, as an equal among equals, just subtly diffident, so that no great name present could take offense. He remembered saying: "Architecture is a great art...with our eyes to the future and the reverence of the past in our hearts...of all the crafts, the most important one sociologically...and, as the man who is an inspiration to us all has said today, the three eternal entities are: Truth, Love and Beauty...."

Then, in the corridors outside, in the noisy confusion of leave-taking, a boy had thrown an arm about Keating's shoulders and whispered: "Run on home and get out of the soup-and-fish, Pete, and it's Boston for us tonight, just our own gang; I'll pick you up in an hour." Ted Shlinker had urged: "Of course you're

coming, Pete. No fun without you. And, by the way, congratulations and all that sort of thing. No hard feelings. May the best man win." Keating had thrown his arm about Shlinker's shoulders; Keating's eyes had glowed with an insistent kind of warmth, as if Shlinker were his most precious friend; Keating's eyes glowed like that on everybody. He had said: "Thanks, Ted, old man. I really do feel awful about the A.G.A. medal--I think you were the one for it, but you never can tell what possesses those old fogies." And now Keating was on his way home through the soft darkness, wondering how to get away from his mother for the night.

His mother, he thought, had done a great deal for him. As she pointed out frequently, she was a lady and had graduated from high school; yet she had worked hard, had taken boarders into their home, a concession unprecedented in her family.

His father had owned a stationery store in Stanton. Changing times had ended the business and a hernia had ended Peter Keating, Sr., twelve years ago. Louisa Keating had been left with the home that stood at the end of a respectable street, an annuity from an insurance kept up accurately--she had seen to that--and her son. The annuity was a modest one, but with the help of the boarders and of a tenacious purpose Mrs. Keating had managed. In the summers her son helped, clerking in hotels or posing for hat advertisements. Her son, Mrs. Keating had decided, would assume his rightful place in the world, and she had clung to this as softly, as inexorably as a leech....It's funny, Keating remembered, at one time he had wanted to be an artist. It was his mother who had chosen a better field in which to exercise his talent for drawing. "Architecture," she had said, "is such a respectable profession. Besides, you meet the best people in it." She had pushed him into his career, he had never known when or how. It's funny, thought Keating, he had not remembered that youthful ambition of his for years. It's funny that it should hurt him now--to remember. Well, this was the night to remember it--and to forget it forever.

Architects, he thought, always made brilliant careers. And once on top, did they ever fail? Suddenly, he recalled Henry Cameron; builder of skyscrapers twenty years ago; old drunkard with offices on some waterfront today. Keating shuddered and walked faster.

He wondered, as he walked, whether people were looking at him. He watched the rectangles of lighted windows; when a curtain fluttered and a head leaned out, he tried to guess whether it had leaned to watch his passing; if it hadn't, some day it would; some day, they all would.

Howard Roark was sitting on the porch steps when Keating approached the house. He was leaning back against the steps, propped up on his elbows, his long legs stretched out. A morning-glory climbed over the porch pillars, as a curtain between the house and the light of a lamppost on the corner.

It was strange to see an electric globe in the air of a spring night. It made the street darker and softer; it hung alone, like a gap, and left nothing to be seen but a few branches heavy with leaves, standing still at the gap's edges. The small hint became immense, as if the darkness held nothing but a flood of leaves. The mechanical ball of glass made the leaves seem more living; it took away their color and gave the promise that in daylight they would be a brighter green than had ever existed; it took away one's sight and left a new sense instead, neither smell nor touch, yet both, a sense of spring and space.

Keating stopped when he recognized the preposterous orange hair in the darkness of the porch. It was the one person whom he had wanted to see tonight. He was glad to find Roark alone, and a little afraid of it.

"Congratulations, Peter," said Roark.

"Oh...Oh, thanks...." Keating was surprised to find that he felt more pleasure than from any other compliment he had received today. He was timidly glad that Roark approved, and he called himself inwardly a fool for it. "...I mean...do you know or..." He added sharply: "Has mother been telling you?"

"She has."

"She shouldn't have!"

"Why not?"

"Look, Howard, you know that I'm terribly sorry about your being..."

Roark threw his head back and looked up at him.

"Forget it," said Roark.

"I...there's something I want to speak to you about, Howard, to ask your advice. Mind if I sit down?"

"What is it?"

Keating sat down on the steps beside him. There was no part that he could ever play in Roark's presence. Besides, he did not feel like playing a part now. He heard a leaf rustling in its fall to the earth; it was a thin, glassy, spring sound.

He knew, for the moment, that he felt affection for Roark; an affection that held pain, astonishment and helplessness.

"You won't think," said Keating gently, in complete sincerity, "that it's awful of me to be asking about my business, when you've just been...?"

"I said forget about that. What is it?"

"You know," said Keating honestly and unexpectedly even to himself, "I've often thought that you're crazy. But I know that you know many things about it--architecture, I mean--which those fools never knew. And I know that you love it as they never will."

"Well?"

"Well, I don't know why I should come to you, but--Howard, I've never said it before, but you see, I'd rather have your opinion on things than the Dean's--I'd probably follow the Dean's, but it's just that yours means more to me myself, I don't know why. I don't know why I'm saying this, either."

Roark turned over on his side, looked at him, and laughed. It was a young, kind, friendly laughter, a thing so rare to hear from Roark that Keating felt as if someone had taken his hand in reassurance; and he forgot that he had a party in Boston waiting for him.

"Come on," said Roark, "you're not being afraid of me, are you? What do you want to ask about?"

"It's about my scholarship. The Paris prize I got."

"Yes?"

"It's for four years. But, on the other hand, Guy Francon offered me a job with him some time ago. Today he said it's still open. And I don't know which to take."

Roark looked at him; Roark's fingers moved in slow rotation, beating against the steps.

"If you want my advice, Peter," he said at last, "you've made a mistake already. By asking me. By asking anyone. Never ask people. Not about your work. Don't you know what you want? How can you stand it, not to know?"

"You see, that's what I admire about you, Howard. You always know."

"Drop the compliments."

"But I mean it. How do you always manage to decide?"

"How can you let others decide for you?"

"But you see, I'm not sure, Howard. I'm never sure of myself. I don't know whether I'm as good as they all tell me I am. I wouldn't admit that to anyone but you. I think it's because you're always so sure that I..."

"Petey!" Mrs. Keating's voice exploded behind them. "Petey, sweetheart! What are you doing there?"

She stood in the doorway, in her best dress of burgundy taffeta, happy and angry.

"And here I've been sitting all alone, waiting for you! What on earth are you doing on those filthy steps in your dress suit? Get up this minute! Come on in the house, boys. I've got hot chocolate and cookies ready for you."

"But, Mother. I wanted to speak to Howard about something important," said Keating. But he rose to his feet.

She seemed not to have heard. She walked into the house. Keating followed.

Roark looked after them, shrugged, rose and went in also.

Mrs. Keating settled down in an armchair, her stiff skirt crackling.

"Well?" she asked. "What were you two discussing out there?"

Keating fingered an ash tray, picked up a matchbox and dropped it, then, ignoring her, turned to Roark.

"Look, Howard, drop the pose," he said, his voice high. "Shall I junk the scholarship and go to work, or let Francon wait and grab the Beaux-Arts to impress the yokels? What do you think?"

Something was gone. The one moment was lost.

"Now, Petey, let me get this straight..." began Mrs. Keating.

"Oh, wait a minute, Mother!...Howard, I've got to weigh it carefully. It isn't

everyone who can get a scholarship like that. You're pretty good when you rate that. A course at the Beaux-Arts--you know how important that is."

"I don't," said Roark.

"Oh, hell, I know your crazy ideas, but I'm speaking practically, for a man in my position. Ideals aside for a moment, it certainly is..."

"You don't want my advice," said Roark.

"Of course I do! I'm asking you!"

But Keating could never be the same when he had an audience, any audience. Something was gone. He did not know it, but he felt that Roark knew; Roark's eyes made him uncomfortable and that made him angry.

"I want to practice architecture," snapped Keating, "not talk about it! Gives you a great prestige--the old École. Puts you above the rank and file of the ex-plumbers who think they can build. On the other hand, an opening with Francon--Guy Francon himself offering it!"

Roark turned away.

"How many boys will match that?" Keating went on blindly. "A year from now they'll be boasting they're working for Smith or Jones if they find work at all. While I'll be with Francon & Heyer!"

"You're quite right, Peter," said Mrs. Keating, rising. "On a question like that you don't want to consult your mother. It's too important. I'll leave you to settle it with Mr. Roark."

He looked at his mother. He did not want to hear what she thought of this; he knew that his only chance to decide was to make the decision before he heard her; she had stopped, looking at him, ready to turn and leave the room; he knew it was not a pose--she would leave if he wished it; he wanted her to go; he wanted it desperately. He said:

"Why, Mother, how can you say that? Of course I want your opinion. What...what do you think?"

She ignored the raw irritation in his voice. She smiled.

"Petey, I never think anything. It's up to you. It's always been up to you."

"Well..." he began hesitantly, watching her, "if I go to the Beaux-Arts..."

"Fine," said Mrs. Keating, "go to the Beaux-Arts. It's a grand place. A whole ocean away from your home. Of course, if you go, Mr. Francon will take somebody else. People will talk about that. Everybody knows that Mr. Francon picks out the best boy from Stanton every year for his office. I wonder how it'll look if some other boy gets the job? But I guess that doesn't matter."

"What...what will people say?"

"Nothing much, I guess. Only that the other boy was the best man of his class. I guess he'll take Shlinker."

"No!" he gulped furiously. "Not Shlinker!"

"Yes," she said sweetly. "Shlinker."

"But..."

"But why should you care what people will say? All you have to do is please yourself."

"And you think that Francon..."

"Why should I think of Mr. Francon? It's nothing to me."

"Mother, you want me to take the job with Francon?"

"I don't want anything, Petey. You're the boss."

He wondered whether he really liked his mother. But she was his mother and this fact was recognized by everybody as meaning automatically that he loved her, and so he took for granted that whatever he felt for her was love. He did not know whether there was any reason why he should respect her judgment. She was his mother; this was supposed to take the place of reasons.

"Yes, of course, Mother....But...Yes, I know, but.. Howard?"

It was a plea for help. Roark was there, on a davenport in the corner, half lying, sprawled limply like a kitten. It had often astonished Keating; he had seen Roark moving with the soundless tension, the control, the precision of a cat; he had seen him relaxed, like a cat, in shapeless ease, as if his body held no single solid bone. Roark glanced up at him. He said:

"Peter, you know how I feel about either one of your opportunities. Take your choice of the lesser evil. What will you learn at the Beaux-Arts? Only more Renaissance palaces and operetta settings. They'll kill everything you might have in you. You do good work, once in a while, when somebody lets you. If you really want to learn, go to work. Francon is a bastard and a fool, but you will be building. It will prepare you for going on your own that much sooner."

"Even Mr. Roark can talk sense sometimes," said Mrs. Keating, "even if he does talk like a truck driver."

"Do you really think that I do good work?" Keating looked at him, as if his eyes still held the reflection of that one sentence--and nothing else mattered.

"Occasionally," said Roark. "Not often."

"Now that it's all settled..." began Mrs. Keating.

"I...I'll have to think it over, Mother."

"Now that it's all settled, how about the hot chocolate? I'll have it out to you in a jiffy!"

She smiled at her son, an innocent smile that declared her obedience and gratitude, and she rustled out of the room.

Keating paced nervously, stopped, lighted a cigarette, stood spitting the smoke out in short jerks, then looked at Roark.

"What are you going to do now, Howard?"

"I?"

"Very thoughtless of me, I know, going on like that about myself. Mother means well, but she drives me crazy....Well, to hell with that. What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to New York."

"Oh, swell. To get a job?"

"To get a job."

"In...in architecture?"

"In architecture, Peter."

"That's grand. I'm glad. Got any definite prospects?"

"I'm going to work for Henry Cameron."

"Oh, no, Howard!"

Roark smiled slowly, the corners of his mouth sharp, and said nothing.

"Oh, no, Howard!"

"Yes "

"But he's nothing, nobody any more! Oh, I know he has a name but he's done for! He never gets any important buildings, hasn't had any for years! They say he's got a dump for an office. What kind of future will you get out of him? What will you learn?"

"Not much. Only how to build."

"For God's sake, you can't go on like that, deliberately ruining yourself! I thought...well, yes, I thought you'd learned something today!"

"I have."

"Look, Howard, if it's because you think that no one else will have you now, no one better, why, I'll help you. I'll work old Francon and I'll get connections and..."

"Thank you, Peter. But it won't be necessary. It's settled."

"What did he say?"

"Who?"

"Cameron."

"I've never met him."

Then a horn screamed outside. Keating remembered, started off to change his clothes, collided with his mother at the door and knocked a cup off her loaded tray.

"Petey!"

"Never mind, Mother!" He seized her elbows. "I'm in a hurry, sweetheart. A little party with the boys--now, now, don't say anything--I won't be late and--look! We'll celebrate my going with Francon & Heyer!"

He kissed her impulsively, with the gay exuberance that made him irresistible at times, and flew out of the room, up the stairs. Mrs. Keating shook her head, flustered, reproving and happy.

In his room, while flinging his clothes in all directions, Keating thought suddenly of a wire he would send to New York. That particular subject had not been in his mind all day, but it came to him with a sense of desperate urgency; he wanted to send that wire now, at once. He scribbled it down on a piece of paper:

"Katie dearest coming New York job Francon love ever

"Peter"

That night Keating raced toward Boston, wedged in between two boys, the wind and the road whistling past him. And he thought that the world was opening to him now, like the darkness fleeing before the bobbing headlights. He was free. He was ready. In a few years--so very soon, for time did not exist in the speed of that car--his name would ring like a horn, ripping people out of sleep. He was ready to do great things, magnificent things, things unsurpassed in...in...oh, hell...in architecture.

3.

PETER KEATING looked at the streets of New York. The people, he observed, were extremely well dressed.

He had stopped for a moment before the building on Fifth Avenue, where the office of Francon & Heyer and his first day of work awaited him. He looked at the men who hurried past. Smart, he thought, smart as hell. He glanced regretfully at his own clothes. He had a great deal to learn in New York.

When he could delay it no longer, he turned to the door. It was a miniature Doric portico, every inch of it scaled down to the exact proportions decreed by the artists who had worn flowing Grecian tunics; between the marble perfection of the columns a revolving door sparkled with nickel plate, reflecting the streaks of automobiles flying past. Keating walked through the revolving door, through the lustrous marble lobby, to an elevator of gilt and red lacquer that brought him, thirty floors later, to a mahogany door. He saw a slender brass plate with delicate letters:

FRANCON & HEYER, ARCHITECTS.

The reception room of the office of Francon & Heyer, Architects, looked like a cool, intimate ballroom in a Colonial mansion. The silver white walls were paneled with flat pilasters; the pilasters were fluted and curved into Ionic snails; they supported little pediments broken in the middle to make room for half a Grecian urn plastered against the wall. Etchings of Greek temples adorned the panels, too small to be distinguished, but presenting the unmistakable columns, pediments and crumbling stone.

Quite incongruously, Keating felt as if a conveyor belt was under his feet, from

the moment he crossed the threshold. It carried him to the reception clerk who sat at a telephone switchboard behind the white balustrade of a Florentine balcony. It transferred him to the threshold of a huge drafting room. He saw long, flat tables, a forest of twisted rods descending from the ceiling to end in green-shaded lamps, enormous blueprint files, towers of yellow drawers, papers, tin boxes, sample bricks, pots of glue and calendars from construction companies, most of them bearing pictures of naked women. The chief draftsman snapped at Keating, without quite seeing him. He was bored and crackling with purpose simultaneously. He jerked his thumb in the direction of a locker room, thrust his chin out toward the door of a locker, and stood, rocking from heels to toes, while Keating pulled a pearl-gray smock over his stiff, uncertain body. Francon had insisted on that smock. The conveyor belt stopped at a table in a corner of the drafting room, where Keating found himself with a set of plans to expand, the scaggy back of the chief draftsman retreating from him in the unmistakable manner of having forgotten his existence.

Keating bent over his task at once, his eyes fixed, his throat rigid. He saw nothing but the pearly shimmer of the paper before him. The steady lines he drew surprised him, for he felt certain that his hand was jerking an inch back and forth across the sheet. He followed the lines, not knowing where they led or why. He knew only that the plan was someone's tremendous achievement which he could neither question nor equal. He wondered why he had ever thought of himself as a potential architect.

Much later, he noticed the wrinkles of a gray smock sticking to a pair of shoulder blades over the next table. He glanced about him, cautiously at first, then with curiosity, then with pleasure, then with contempt. When he reached this last, Peter Keating became himself again and felt love for mankind. He noticed sallow cheeks, a funny nose, a wart on a receding chin, a stomach squashed against the edge of a table. He loved these sights. What these could do, he could do better. He smiled. Peter Keating needed his fellow men.

When he glanced at his plans again, he noticed the flaws glaring at him from the masterpiece. It was the floor of a private residence, and he noted the twisted hallways that sliced great hunks of space for no apparent reason, the long, rectangular sausages of rooms doomed to darkness. Jesus, he thought, they'd have flunked me for this in the first term. After which, he proceeded with his work swiftly, easily, expertly--and happily.

Before lunchtime. Keating had made friends in the room, not any definite friends, but a vague soil spread and ready from which friendship would spring. He had smiled at his neighbors and winked in understanding over nothing at all. He had used each trip to the water cooler to caress those he passed with the soft, cheering glow of his eyes, the brilliant eyes that seemed to pick each man in turn out of the room, out of the universe, as the most important specimen of humanity and as Keating's dearest friend. There goes--there seemed to be left in his wake--a smart boy and a hell of a good fellow.

Keating noticed that a tall blond youth at the next table was doing the elevation of an office building. Keating leaned with chummy respect against the boy's shoulder and looked at the laurel garlands entwined about fluted columns three floors high.

"Pretty good for the old man," said Keating with admiration.

"Who?" asked the boy.

"Why, Francon," said Keating.

"Francon hell," said the boy placidly. "He hasn't designed a doghouse in eight years." He jerked his thumb over his shoulder, at a glass door behind them. "Him."

"What?" asked Keating, turning.

"Him," said the boy. "Stengel. He does all these things."

Behind the glass door Keating saw a pair of bony shoulders above the edge of a desk, a small, triangular head bent intently, and two blank pools of light in the round frames of glasses.

It was late in the afternoon when a presence seemed to have passed beyond the closed door, and Keating learned from the rustle of whispers around him that Guy Francon had arrived and had risen to his office on the floor above. Half an hour later the glass door opened and Stengel came out, a huge piece of cardboard dangling between his fingers.

"Hey, you," he said, his glasses stopping on Keating's face. "You doing the plans for this?" He swung the cardboard forward. "Take this up to the boss for the okay. Try to listen to what he'll say and try to look intelligent. Neither of which matters anyway."

He was short and his arms seemed to hang down to his ankles; arms swinging like ropes in the long sleeves, with big, efficient hands. Keating's eyes froze, darkening, for one-tenth of a second, gathered in a tight stare at the blank lenses. Then Keating smiled and said pleasantly:

"Yes, sir."

He carried the cardboard on the tips of his ten fingers, up the crimson-plushed stairway to Guy Francon's office. The cardboard displayed a water-color perspective of a gray granite mansion with three tiers of dormers, five balconies, four bays, twelve columns, one flagpole and two lions at the entrance. In the corner, neatly printed by hand, stood: "Residence of Mr. and Mrs. James S. Whattles. Francon & Heyer, Architects." Keating whistled softly: James S. Whattles was the multimillionaire manufacturer of shaving lotions.

Guy Francon's office was polished. No, thought Keating, not polished, but shellacked; no, not shellacked, but liquid with mirrors melted and poured over every object. He saw splinters of his own reflection let loose like a swarm of butterflies, following him across the room, on the Chippendale cabinets, on the Jacobean chairs, on the Louis XV mantelpiece. He had time to note a genuine Roman statue in a corner, sepia photographs of the Parthenon, of Rheims Cathedral, of Versailles and of the Frink National Bank Building with the eternal torch.

He saw his own legs approaching him in the side of the massive mahogany desk. Guy Francon sat behind the desk. Guy Francon's face was yellow and his cheeks sagged. He looked at Keating for an instant as if he had never seen him before, then remembered and smiled expansively.

"Well, well, well, Kittredge, my boy, here we are, all set and at home! So glad to see you. Sit down, boy, sit down, what have you got there? Well, there's no hurry, no hurry at all. Sit down. How do you like it here?"

"I'm afraid, sir, that I'm a little too happy," said Keating, with an expression of frank, boyish helplessness. "I thought I could be businesslike on my first job, but starting in a place like this...I guess it knocked me out a

little....I'll get over it, sir," he promised.

"Of course," said Guy Francon. "It might be a bit overwhelming for a boy, just a bit. But don't you worry. I'm sure you'll make good."

"I'll do my best, sir."

"Of course you will. What's this they sent me?" Francon extended his hand to the drawing, but his fingers came to rest limply on his forehead instead. "It's so annoying, this headache....No, no, nothing serious--" he smiled at Keating's prompt concern--"just a little mal de tête. One works so hard."

"Is there anything I can get for you, sir?"

"No, no, thank you. It's not anything you can get for me, it's if only you could take something away from me." He winked. "The champagne. Entre nous, that champagne of theirs wasn't worth a damn last night. I've never cared for champagne anyway. Let me tell you, Kittredge, it's very important to know about wines, for instance when you'll take a client out to dinner and will want to be sure of the proper thing to order. Now I'll tell you a professional secret. Take quail, for instance. Now most people would order Burgundy with it. What do you do? You call for Clos Vougeot 1904. See? Adds that certain touch. Correct, but original. One must always be original....Who sent you up, by the way?"

"Mr. Stengel, sir."

"Oh, Stengel." The tone in which he pronounced the name clicked like a shutter in Keating's mind: it was a permission to be stored away for future use. "Too grand to bring his own stuff up, eh? Mind you, he's a great designer, the best designer in New York City, but he's just getting to be a bit too grand lately. He thinks he's the only one doing any work around here, just because he smudges at a board all day long. You'll learn, my boy, when you've been in the business longer, that the real work of an office is done beyond its walls. Take last night, for instance. Banquet of the Clarion Real Estate Association. Two hundred guests--dinner and champagne--oh, yes, champagne!" He wrinkled his nose fastidiously, in self-mockery. "A few words to say informally in a little after-dinner speech--you know, nothing blatant, no vulgar sales talk--only a few well-chosen thoughts on the responsibility of realtors to society, on the importance of selecting architects who are competent, respected and well established. You know, a few bright little slogans that will stick in the mind."

"Yes, sir, like 'Choose the builder of your home as carefully as you choose the bride to inhabit it.'"

"Not bad. Not bad at all, Kittredge. Mind if I jot it down?"

"My name is Keating, sir," said Keating firmly. "You are very welcome to the idea. I'm happy if it appeals to you."

"Keating, of course! Why, of course, Keating," said Francon with a disarming smile. "Dear me, one meets so many people. How did you say it? Choose the builder...it was very well put."

He made Keating repeat it and wrote it down on a pad, picking a pencil from an array before him, new, many-colored pencils, sharpened to a professional needle point, ready, unused.

Then he pushed the pad aside, sighed, patted the smooth waves of his hair and said wearily:

"Well, all right, I suppose I'll have to look at the thing."

Keating extended the drawing respectfully. Francon leaned back, held the cardboard out at arm's length and looked at it. He closed his left eye, then his right eye, then moved the cardboard an inch farther. Keating expected wildly to see him turn the drawing upside down. But Francon just held it and Keating knew suddenly that he had long since stopped seeing it. Francon was studying it for his, Keating's, benefit; and then Keating felt light, light as air, and he saw the road to his future, clear and open.

"Hm...yes," Francon was saying, rubbing his chin with the tips of two soft fingers. "Hm...yes..."

He turned to Keating.

"Not bad," said Francon. "Not bad at all....Well...perhaps...it would have been more distinguished, you know, but...well, the drawing is done so neatly....What do you think, Keating?"

Keating thought that four of the windows faced four mammoth granite columns. But he looked at Francon's fingers playing with a petunia-mauve necktie, and decided not to mention it. He said instead:

"If I may make a suggestion, sir, it seems to me that the cartouches between the fourth and fifth floors are somewhat too modest for so imposing a building. It would appear that an ornamented stringcourse would be so much more appropriate."

"That's it. I was just going to say it. An ornamented stringcourse....But...but look, it would mean diminishing the fenestration, wouldn't it?"

"Yes," said Keating, a faint coating of diffidence over the tone he had used in discussions with his classmates, "but windows are less important than the dignity of a building's facade."

"That's right. Dignity. We must give our clients dignity above all. Yes, definitely, an ornamented stringcourse....Only...look, I've approved the preliminary drawings, and Stengel has had this done up so neatly."

"Mr. Stengel will be delighted to change it if you advise him to."

Francon's eyes held Keating's for a moment. Then Francon's lashes dropped and he picked a piece of lint off his sleeve.

"Of course, of course..." he said vaguely. "But...do you think the stringcourse is really important?"

"I think," said Keating slowly, "it is more important to make changes you find necessary than to okay every drawing just as Mr. Stengel designed it."

Because Francon said nothing, but only looked straight at him, because Francon's eyes were focused and his hands limp, Keating knew that he had taken a terrible chance and won; he became frightened by the chance after he knew he had won.

They looked silently across the desk, and both saw that they were two men who could understand each other.

"We'll have an ornamented stringcourse," said Francon with calm, genuine authority. "Leave this here. Tell Stengel that I want to see him."

He had turned to go. Francon stopped him. Francon's voice was gay and warm:

"Oh, Keating, by the way, may I make a suggestion? Just between us, no offense intended, but a burgundy necktie would be so much better than blue with your gray smock, don't you think so?"

"Yes, sir," said Keating easily. "Thank you. You'll see it tomorrow."

He walked out and closed the door softly.

On his way back through the reception room, Keating saw a distinguished, gray-haired gentleman escorting a lady to the door. The gentleman wore no hat and obviously belonged to the office; the lady wore a mink cape, and was obviously a client.

The gentleman was not bowing to the ground, he was not unrolling a carpet, he was not waving a fan over her head; he was only holding the door for her. It merely seemed to Keating that the gentleman was doing all of that.

The Frink National Bank Building rose over Lower Manhattan, and its long shadow moved, as the sun traveled over the sky, like a huge clock hand across grimy tenements, from the Aquarium to Manhattan Bridge. When the sun was gone, the torch of Hadrian's Mausoleum flared up in its stead, and made glowing red smears on the glass of windows for miles around, on the top stories of buildings high enough to reflect it. The Frink National Bank Building displayed the entire history of Roman art in well-chosen specimens; for a long time it had been considered the best building of the city, because no other structure could boast a single Classical item which it did not possess. It offered so many columns, pediments, friezes, tripods, gladiators, urns and volutes that it looked as if it had not been built of white marble, but squeezed out of a pastry tube. It was, however, built of white marble. No one knew that but the owners who had paid for it. It was now of a streaked, blotched, leprous color, neither brown nor green but the worst tones of both, the color of slow rot, the color of smoke, gas fumes and acids eating into a delicate stone intended for clean air and open country. The Frink National Bank Building, however, was a great success. It had been so great a success that it was the last structure Guy Francon ever designed; its prestige spared him the bother from then on.

Three blocks east of the Frink National Bank stood the Dana Building. It was some stories lower and without any prestige whatever. Its lines were hard and simple, revealing, emphasizing the harmony of the steel skeleton within, as a body reveals the perfection of its bones. It had no other ornament to offer. It displayed nothing but the precision of its sharp angles, the modeling of its planes, the long streaks of its windows like streams of ice running down from the roof to the pavements. New Yorkers seldom looked at the Dana Building. Sometimes, a rare country visitor would come upon it unexpectedly in the moonlight and stop and wonder from what dream that vision had come. But such visitors were rare. The tenants of the Dana Building said that they would not exchange it for any structure on earth; they appreciated the light, the air, the beautiful logic of the plan in their halls and offices. But the tenants of the Dana Building were not numerous; no prominent man wished his business to be located in a building that looked "like a warehouse."

The Dana Building had been designed by Henry Cameron.

In the eighteen-eighties, the architects of New York fought one another for second place in their profession. No one aspired to the first. The first was held by Henry Cameron. Henry Cameron was hard to get in those days. He had a

waiting list two years in advance; he designed personally every structure that left his office. He chose what he wished to build. When he built, a client kept his mouth shut. He demanded of all people the one thing he had never granted anybody: obedience. He went through the years of his fame like a projectile flying to a goal no one could guess. People called him crazy. But they took what he gave them, whether they understood it or not, because it was a building "by Henry Cameron."

At first, his buildings were merely a little different, not enough to frighten anyone. He made startling experiments, once in a while, but people expected it and one did not argue with Henry Cameron. Something was growing in him with each new building, struggling, taking shape, rising dangerously to an explosion. The explosion came with the birth of the skyscraper. When structures began to rise not in tier on ponderous tier of masonry, but as arrows of steel shooting upward without weight or limit, Henry Cameron was among the first to understand this new miracle and to give it form. He was among the first and the few who accepted the truth that a tall building must look tall. While architects cursed, wondering how to make a twenty-story building look like an old brick mansion, while they used every horizontal device available in order to cheat it of its height, shrink it down to tradition, hide the shame of its steel, make it small, safe and ancient--Henry Cameron designed skyscrapers in straight, vertical lines, flaunting their steel and height. While architects drew friezes and pediments, Henry Cameron decided that the skyscraper must not copy the Greeks. Henry Cameron decided that no building must copy any other.

He was thirty-nine years old then, short, stocky, unkempt; he worked like a dog, missed his sleep and meals, drank seldom but then brutally, called his clients unprintable names, laughed at hatred and fanned it deliberately, behaved like a feudal lord and a longshoreman, and lived in a passionate tension that stung men in any room he entered, a fire neither they nor he could endure much longer. It was the year 1892.

The Columbian Exposition of Chicago opened in the year 1893.

The Rome of two thousand years ago rose on the shores of Lake Michigan, a Rome improved by pieces of France, Spain, Athens and every style that followed it. It was a "Dream City" of columns, triumphal arches, blue lagoons, crystal fountains and popcorn. Its architects competed on who could steal best, from the oldest source and from the most sources at once. It spread before the eyes of a new country every structural crime ever committed in all the old ones. It was white as a plague, and it spread as such.

People came, looked, were astounded, and carried away with them, to the cities of America, the seeds of what they had seen. The seeds sprouted into weeds; into shingled post offices with Doric porticos, brick mansions with iron pediments, lofts made of twelve Parthenons piled on top of one another. The weeds grew and choked everything else.

Henry Cameron had refused to work for the Columbian Exposition, and had called it names that were unprintable, but repeatable, though not in mixed company. They were repeated. It was repeated also that he had thrown an inkstand at the face of a distinguished banker who had asked him to design a railroad station in the shape of the temple of Diana at Ephesus. The banker never came back. There were others who never came back.

Just as he reached the goal of long, struggling years, just as he gave shape to the truth he had sought--the last barrier fell closed before him. A young country had watched him on his way, had wondered, had begun to accept the new grandeur of his work. A country flung two thousand years back in an orgy of

Classicism could find no place for him and no use.

It was not necessary to design buildings any longer, only to photograph them; the architect with the best library was the best architect. Imitators copied imitations. To sanction it there was Culture; there were twenty centuries unrolling in moldering ruins; there was the great Exposition; there was every European post card in every family album.

Henry Cameron had nothing to offer against this; nothing but a faith he held merely because it was his own. He had nobody to quote and nothing of importance to say. He said only that the form of a building must follow its function; that the structure of a building is the key to its beauty; that new methods of construction demand new forms; that he wished to build as he wished and for that reason only. But people could not listen to him when they were discussing Vitruvius, Michelangelo and Sir Christopher Wren.

Men hate passion, any great passion. Henry Cameron made a mistake: he loved his work. That was why he fought. That was why he lost.

People said he never knew that he had lost. If he did, he never let them see it. As his clients became rarer, his manner to them grew more overbearing. The less the prestige of his name, the more arrogant the sound of his voice pronouncing it. He had had an astute business manager, a mild, self-effacing little man of iron who, in the days of his glory, faced quietly the storms of Cameron's temper and brought him clients; Cameron insulted the clients, but the little man made them accept it and come back. The little man died.

Cameron had never known how to face people. They did not matter to him, as his own life did not matter, as nothing mattered but buildings. He had never learned to give explanations, only orders. He had never been liked. He had been feared. No one feared him any longer.

He was allowed to live. He lived to loathe the streets of the city he had dreamed of rebuilding. He lived to sit at the desk in his empty office, motionless, idle, waiting. He lived to read in a well-meaning newspaper account a reference to "the late Henry Cameron." He lived to begin drinking, quietly, steadily, terribly, for days and nights at a time; and to hear those who had driven him to it say, when his name was mentioned for a commission: "Cameron? I should say not. He drinks like a fish. That's why he never gets any work." He lived to move from the offices that occupied three floors of a famous building to one floor on a less expensive street, then to a suite farther downtown, then to three rooms facing an air shaft, near the Battery. He chose these rooms because, by pressing his face to the window of his office, he could see, over a brick wall, the top of the Dana Building.

Howard Roark looked at the Dana Building beyond the windows, stopping at each landing, as he mounted the six flights of stairs to Henry Cameron's office; the elevator was out of order. The stairs had been painted a dirty file-green a long time ago; a little of the paint remained to grate under shoe soles in crumbling patches. Roark went up swiftly, as if he had an appointment, a folder of his drawings under his arm, his eyes on the Dana Building. He collided once with a man descending the stairs; this had happened to him often in the last two days; he had walked through the streets of the city, his head thrown back, noticing nothing but the buildings of New York.

In the dark cubbyhole of Cameron's anteroom stood a desk with a telephone and a typewriter. A gray-haired skeleton of a man sat at the desk, in his shirt sleeves, with a pair of limp suspenders over his shoulders. He was typing specifications intently, with two fingers and incredible speed. The light from a

feeble bulb made a pool of yellow on his back, where the damp shirt stuck to his shoulder blades.

The man raised his head slowly, when Roark entered. He looked at Roark, said nothing and waited, his old eyes weary, unquestioning, incurious.

"I should like to see Mr. Cameron," said Roark.

"Yeah?" said the man, without challenge, offense or meaning. "About what?"

"About a job."

"What job?"

"Drafting."

The man sat looking at him blankly. It was a request that had not confronted him for a long time. He rose at last, without a word, shuffled to a door behind him and went in.

He left the door half open. Roark heard him drawling:

"Mr. Cameron, there's a fellow outside says he's looking for a job here."

Then a voice answered, a strong, clear voice that held no tones of age:

"Why, the damn fool! Throw him out...Wait! Send him in!"

The old man returned, held the door open and jerked his head at it silently. Roark went in. The door closed behind him.

Henry Cameron sat at his desk at the end of a long, bare room. He sat bent forward, his forearms on the desk, his two hands closed before him. His hair and his beard were coal black, with coarse threads of white. The muscles of his short, thick neck bulged like ropes. He wore a white shirt with the sleeves rolled above the elbows; the bare arms were hard, heavy and brown. The flesh of his broad face was rigid, as if it had aged by compression. The eyes were dark, young, living.

Roark stood on the threshold and they looked at each other across the long room.

The light from the air shaft was gray, and the dust on the drafting table, on the few green files, looked like fuzzy crystals deposited by the light. But on the wall, between the windows, Roark saw a picture. It was the only picture in the room. It was the drawing of a skyscraper that had never been erected.

Roark's eyes moved first and they moved to the drawing. He walked across the office, stopped before it and stood looking at it. Cameron's eyes followed him, a heavy glance, like a long, thin needle held fast at one end, describing a slow circle, its point piercing Roark's body, keeping it pinned firmly. Cameron looked at the orange hair, at the hand hanging by his side, its palm to the drawing, the fingers bent slightly, forgotten not in a gesture but in the overture to a gesture of asking or seizing something.

"Well?" said Cameron at last. "Did you come to see me or did you come to look at pictures?"

Roark turned to him.

"Both," said Roark.

He walked to the desk. People had always lost their sense of existence in Roark's presence; but Cameron felt suddenly that he had never been as real as in the awareness of the eyes now looking at him.

"What do you want?" snapped Cameron. "I should like to work for you," said Roark quietly. The voice said: "I should like to work for you." The tone of the voice said: "I'm going to work for you."

"Are you?" said Cameron, not realizing that he answered the unpronounced sentence. "What's the matter? None of the bigger and better fellows will have you?"

"I have not applied to anyone else."

"Why not? Do you think this is the easiest place to begin? Think anybody can walk in here without trouble? Do you know who I am?"

"Yes. That's why I'm here."

"Who sent you?"

"No one."

"Why the hell should you pick me?"

"I think you know that."

"What infernal impudence made you presume that I'd want you? Have you decided that I'm so hard up that I'd throw the gates open for any punk who'd do me the honor? 'Old Cameron,' you've said to yourself, 'is a has-been, a drunken...' come on, you've said it!... 'a drunken failure who can't be particular!' Is that it?... Come on, answer me! Answer me, damn you! What are you staring at? Is that it? Go on! Deny it!"

"It's not necessary."

"Where have you worked before?"

"I'm just beginning."

"What have you done?"

"I've had three years at Stanton."

"Oh? The gentleman was too lazy to finish?"

"I have been expelled."

"Great!" Cameron slapped the desk with his fist and laughed. "Splendid! You're not good enough for the lice nest at Stanton, but you'll work for Henry Cameron! You've decided this is the place for refuse! What did they kick you out for? Drink? Women? What?"

"These," said Roark, and extended his drawings. Cameron looked at the first one, then at the next, then at every one of them to the bottom. Roark heard the paper rustling as Cameron slipped one sheet behind another. Then Cameron raised his head. "Sit down."

Roark obeyed. Cameron stared at him, his thick fingers drumming against the pile of drawings.

"So you think they're good?" said Cameron. "Well, they're awful. It's unspeakable. It's a crime. Look," he shoved a drawing at Roark's face, "look at that. What in Christ's name was your idea? What possessed you to indent that plan here? Did you just want to make it pretty, because you had to patch something together? Who do you think you are? Guy Francon, God help you?...Look at this building, you fool! You get an idea like this and you don't know what to do with it! You stumble on a magnificent thing and you have to ruin it! Do you know how much you've got to learn?"

"Yes. That's why I'm here."

"And look at that one! I wish I'd done that at your age! But why did you have to botch it? Do you know what I'd do with that? Look, to hell with your stairways and to hell with your furnace room! When you lay the foundations..."

He spoke furiously for a long time. He cursed. He did not find one sketch to satisfy him. But Roark noticed that he spoke as of buildings that were in construction.

He broke off abruptly, pushed the drawings aside, and put his fist over them. He asked:

"When did you decide to become an architect?"

"When I was ten years old."

"Men don't know what they want so early in life, if ever. You're lying."

"Am I?"

"Don't stare at me like that! Can't you look at something else? Why did you decide to be an architect?"

"I didn't know it then. But it's because I've never believed in God."

"Come on, talk sense."

"Because I love this earth. That's all I love. I don't like the shape of things on this earth. I want to change them."

"For whom?"

"For myself."

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-two."

"When did you hear all that?"

"I didn't."

"Men don't talk like that at twenty-two. You're abnormal."

"Probably."

"I didn't mean it as a compliment."

"I didn't either."

"Got any family?"

"No."

"Worked through school?"

"Yes."

"At what?"

"In the building trades."

"How much money have you got left?"

"Seventeen dollars and thirty cents."

"When did you come to New York?"

"Yesterday."

Cameron looked at the white pile under his fist.

"God damn you," said Cameron softly.

"God damn you!" roared Cameron suddenly, leaning forward. "I didn't ask you to come here! I don't need any draftsmen! There's nothing here to draft! I don't have enough work to keep myself and my men out of the Bowery Mission! I don't want any fool visionaries starving around here! I don't want the responsibility. I didn't ask for it. I never thought I'd see it again. I'm through with it. I was through with that many years ago. I'm perfectly happy with the drooling dolts I've got here, who never had anything and never will have and it makes no difference what becomes of them. That's all I want Why did you have to come here? You're setting out to ruin yourself, you know that, don't you? And I'll help you to do it. I don't want to see you. I don't like you. I don't like your face. You look like an insufferable egotist. You're impertinent. You're too sure of yourself. Twenty years ago I'd have punched your face with the greatest of pleasure. You're coming to work here tomorrow at nine o'clock sharp."

"Yes," said Roark, rising.

"Fifteen dollars a week. That's all I can pay you."

"Yes."

"You're a damn fool. You should have gone to someone else. I'll kill you if you go to anyone else. What's your name?"

"Howard Roark."

"If you're late, I'll fire you."

"Yes."

Roark extended his hand for the drawings.

"Leave these here!" bellowed Cameron. "Now get out!"

4.

"TOOHEY," said Guy Francon, "Ellsworth Toohey. Pretty decent of him, don't you think? Read it, Peter."

Francon leaned jovially across his desk and handed to Keating the August issue of *New Frontiers*. *New Frontiers* had a white cover with a black emblem that combined a palette, a lyre, a hammer, a screw driver and a rising sun; it had a circulation of thirty thousand and a following that described itself as the intellectual vanguard of the country; no one had ever risen to challenge the description. Keating read from an article entitled "Marble and Mortar," by Ellsworth M. Toohey:

"...And now we come to another notable achievement of the metropolitan skyline. We call the attention of the discriminating to the new Melton Building by Francon & Heyer. It stands in white serenity as an eloquent witness to the triumph of Classical purity and common sense. The discipline of an immortal tradition has served here as a cohesive factor in evolving a structure whose beauty can reach, simply and lucidly, the heart of every man in the street. There is no freak exhibitionism here, no perverted striving for novelty, no orgy of unbridled egotism. Guy Francon, its designer, has known how to subordinate himself to the mandatory canons which generations of craftsmen behind him have proved inviolate, and at the same time how to display his own creative originality, not in spite of, but precisely because of the Classical dogma he has accepted with the humility of a true artist. It may be worth mentioning, in passing, that dogmatic discipline is the only thing which makes true originality possible...."

"More important, however, is the symbolic significance of a building such as this rising in our imperial city. As one stands before its southern facade, one is stricken with the realization that the stringcourses, repeated with deliberate and gracious monotony from the third to the eighteenth story, these long, straight, horizontal lines are the moderating, leveling principle, the lines of equality. They seem to bring the towering structure down to the humble level of the observer. They are the lines of the earth, of the people, of the great masses. They seem to tell us that none may rise too high above the restraint of the common human level, that all is held and shall be checked, even as this proud edifice, by the stringcourses of men's brotherhood...."

There was more. Keating read it all, then raised his head. "Gee!" he said, awed.

Francon smiled happily.

"Pretty good, eh? And from Toohey, no less. Not many people might have heard the name, but they will, mark my word, they will. I know the signs.... So he doesn't think I'm so bad? And he's got a tongue like an icepick, when he feels like using it. You should see what he says about others, more often than not. You know Durkin's latest mousetrap? Well, I was at a party where Toohey said--" Francon chuckled--"he said: 'If Mr. Durkin suffers under the delusion that he is an architect, someone should mention to him the broad opportunities offered by the shortage of skilled plumbers.' That's what he said, imagine, in public!"

"I wonder," said Keating wistfully, "what he'll say about me, when the times comes."

"What on earth does he mean by the symbolic significance stuff and the stringcourses of men's brotherhood?...Oh, well, if that's what he praises us for, we should worry!"

"It's the critic's job to interpret the artist, Mr. Francon, even to the artist himself. Mr. Toohey has merely stated the hidden significance that was subconsciously in your own mind."

"Oh," said Francon vaguely. "Oh, do you think so?" he added brightly. "Quite possible....Yes, quite possible....You're a smart boy, Peter."

"Thank you, Mr. Francon." Keating made a movement to rise.

"Wait. Don't go. One more cigarette and then we'll both return to the drudgery."

Francon was smiling over the article, reading it again. Keating had never seen him so pleased; no drawing in the office, no work accomplished had ever made him as happy as these words from another man on a printed page to be read by other eyes.

Keating sat easily in a comfortable chair. His month with the firm had been well spent. He had said nothing and done nothing, but the impression had spread through the office that Guy Francon liked to see this particular boy sent to him whenever anyone had to be sent. Hardly a day passed without the pleasant interlude of sitting across the desk from Guy Francon, in a respectful, growing intimacy, listening to Francon's sighs about the necessity of being surrounded by men who understood him.

Keating had learned all he could team about Guy Francon, from his fellow draftsmen. He had teamed that Guy Francon ate moderately and exquisitely, and prided himself on the title of gourmet; that he had graduated with distinction from the École des Beaux-Arts; that he had married a great deal of money and that the marriage had not been a happy one; that he matched meticulously his socks with his handkerchiefs, but never with his neckties; that he had a great preference for designing buildings of gray granite; that he owned a quarry of gray granite in Connecticut, which did a thriving business; that he maintained a magnificent bachelor apartment done in plum-colored Louis XV; that his wife, of a distinguished old name, had died, leaving her fortune to their only daughter, that the daughter, now nineteen, was away at college.

These last facts interested Keating a great deal. He mentioned to Francon, tentatively in passing, the subject of his daughter. "Oh, yes..." Francon said thinly. "Yes, indeed..." Keating abandoned all further research into the matter, for the time being; Francon's face had declared that the thought of his daughter was painfully annoying to him, for some reason which Keating could not discover.

Keating had met Lucius N. Heyer, Francon's partner, and had seen him come to the office twice in three weeks, but had been unable to learn what service Heyer rendered to the firm. Heyer did not have haemophilia, but looked as though he should have it. He was a withered aristocrat, with a long, thin neck, pate, bulging eyes and a manner of frightened sweetness toward everyone. He was the relic of an ancient family, and it was suspected that Francon had taken him into partnership for the sake of his social connections. People felt sorry for poor dear Lucius, admired him for the effort of undertaking a professional career, and thought it would be nice to let him build their homes. Francon built them and required no further service from Lucius. This satisfied everybody.

The men in the drafting rooms loved Peter Keating. He made them feel as if he had been there for a long time; he had always known how to become part of any

place he entered; he came soft and bright as a sponge to be filled, unresisting, with the air and the mood of the place. His warm smile, his gay voice, the easy shrug of his shoulders seemed to say that nothing weighed too much within his soul and so he was not one to blame, to demand, to accuse anything.

As he sat now, watching Francon read the article, Francon raised his head to glance at him. Francon saw two eyes looking at him with immense approval--and two bright little points of contempt in the corners of Keating's mouth, like two musical notes of laughter visible the second before they were to be heard. Francon felt a great wave of comfort. The comfort came from the contempt. The approval, together with that wise half-smile, granted him a grandeur he did not have to earn; a blind admiration would have been precarious; a deserved admiration would have been a responsibility; an undeserved admiration was precious.

"When you go, Peter, give this to Miss Jeffers to put in my scrapbook."

On his way down the stairs, Keating flung the magazine high in the air and caught it smartly, his lips pursed to whistle without sound.

In the drafting room he found Tim Davis, his best friend, slouched despondently over a drawing. Tim Davis was the tall, blond boy at the next table, whom Keating had noticed long ago, because he had known, with no tangible evidence, but with certainty, as Keating always knew such things, that this was the favored draftsman of the office. Keating managed to be assigned, as frequently as possible, to do parts of the projects on which Davis worked. Soon they were going out to lunch together, and to a quiet little speak-easy after the day's work, and Keating was listening with breathless attention to Davis' talk about his love for one Elaine Duffy, not a word of which Keating ever remembered afterward.

He found Davis now in black gloom, his mouth chewing furiously a cigarette and a pencil at once. Keating did not have to question him. He merely bent his friendly face over Davis' shoulder. Davis spit out the cigarette and exploded. He had just been told that he would have to work overtime tonight, for the third time this week.

"Got to stay late, God knows how late! Gotta finish this damn tripe tonight!" He slammed the sheets spread before him. "Look at it! Hours and hours and hours to finish it! What am I going to do?"

"Well, it's because you're the best man here, Tim, and they need you."

"To hell with that! I've got a date with Elaine tonight! How'm I going to break it? Third time! She won't believe me! She told me so last time! That's the end! I'm going up to Guy the Mighty and tell him where he can put his plans and his job! I'm through!"

"Wait," said Keating, and leaned closer to him. "Wait! There's another way. I'll finish them for you."

"Huh?"

"I'll stay. I'll do them. Don't be afraid. No one'll tell the difference."

"Pete! Would you?"

"Sure. I've nothing to do tonight. You just stay till they all go home, then skip."

"Oh, gee, Pete!" Davis sighed, tempted. "But look, if they find out, they'll can me. You're too new for this kind of job."

"They won't find out."

"I can't lose my job, Pete. You know I can't. Elaine and I are going to be married soon. If anything happens..."

"Nothing will happen."

Shortly after six, Davis departed furtively from the empty drafting room, leaving Keating at his table.

Bending under a solitary green lamp. Keating glanced at the desolate expanse of three long rooms, oddly silent after the day's rush, and he felt that he owned them, that he would own them, as surely as the pencil moved in his hand.

It was half past nine when he finished the plans, stacked them neatly on Davis' table, and left the office. He walked down the street, glowing with a comfortable, undignified feeling, as though after a good meal. Then the realization of his loneliness struck him suddenly. He had to share this with someone tonight. He had no one. For the first time he wished his mother were in New York. But she had remained in Stanton, awaiting the day when he would be able to send for her. He had nowhere to go tonight, save to the respectable little boardinghouse on West Twenty-Eighth Street, where he could climb three flights of stairs to his clean, airless little room. He had met people in New York, many people, many girls, with one of whom he remembered spending a pleasant night, though he could not remember her last name; but he wished to see none of them. And then he thought of Catherine Halsey.

He had sent her a wire on the night of his graduation and forgotten her ever since. Now he wanted to see her; the desire was intense and immediate with the first sound of her name in his memory. He leaped into a bus for the long ride to Greenwich Village, climbed to the deserted top and, sitting alone on the front bench, cursed the traffic lights whenever they turned to red. It had always been like this where Catherine was concerned; and he wondered dimly what was the matter with him.

He had met her a year ago in Boston, where she had lived with her widowed mother. He had found Catherine homely and dull, on that first meeting, with nothing to her credit but her lovely smile, not a sufficient reason ever to see her again. He had telephoned her the next evening. Of the countless girls he had known in his student years she was the only one with whom he had never progressed beyond a few kisses. He could have any girl he met and he knew it; he knew that he could have Catherine; he wanted her; she loved him and had admitted it simply, openly, without fear or shyness, asking nothing of him, expecting nothing; somehow, he had never taken advantage of it. He had felt proud of the girls whom he escorted in those days, the most beautiful girls, the most popular, the best dressed, and he had delighted in the envy of his schoolmates. He had been ashamed of Catherine's thoughtless sloppiness and of the fact that no other boy would look at her twice. But he had never been as happy as when he took her to fraternity dances. He had had many violent loves, when he swore he could not live without this girl or that; he forgot Catherine for weeks at a time and she never reminded him. He had always come back to her, suddenly, inexplicably, as he did tonight.

Her mother, a gentle little schoolteacher, had died last winter. Catherine had gone to live with an uncle in New York. Keating had answered some of her letters

immediately, others--months later. She had always replied at once, and never written during his long silences, waiting patiently. He had felt, when he thought of her, that nothing would ever replace her. Then, in New York, within reach of a bus or a telephone, he had forgotten her again for a month.

He never thought, as he hurried to her now, that he should have announced his visit. He never wondered whether he would find her at home. He had always come back like this and she had always been there. She was there again tonight.

She opened the door for him, on the top floor of a shabby, pretentious brownstone house. "Hello, Peter," she said, as if she had seen him yesterday.

She stood before him, too small, too thin for her clothes. The short black skirt flared out from the slim band of her waist; the boyish shirt collar hung loosely, pulled to one side, revealing the knob of a thin collarbone; the sleeves were too long over the fragile hands. She looked at him, her head bent to one side; her chestnut hair was gathered carelessly at the back of her neck, but it looked as though it were bobbed, standing, light and fuzzy, as a shapeless halo about her face. Her eyes were gray, wide and nearsighted; her mouth smiled slowly, delicately, enchantingly, her lips glistening. "Hello, Katie," he said.

He felt at peace. He felt he had nothing to fear, in this house or anywhere outside. He had prepared himself to explain how busy he'd been in New York; but explanations seemed irrelevant now.

"Give me your hat," she said, "be careful of that chair, it's not very steady, we have better ones in the living room, come in." The living room, he noticed, was modest but somehow distinguished, and in surprisingly good taste. He noticed the books; cheap shelves rising to the ceiling, loaded with precious volumes; the volumes stacked carelessly, actually being used. He noticed, over a neat, shabby desk, a Rembrandt etching, stained and yellow, found, perhaps, in some junk shop by the eyes of a connoisseur who had never parted with it, though its price would have obviously been of help to him. He wondered what business her uncle could be in; he had never asked.

He stood looking vaguely at the room, feeling her presence behind him, enjoying that sense of certainty which he found so rarely. Then he turned and took her in his arms and kissed her; her lips met his softly, eagerly; but she was neither frightened nor excited, too happy to accept this in any way save by taking it for granted.

"God, I've missed you!" he said, and knew that he had, every day since he'd seen her last and most of all, perhaps, on the days when he had not thought of her.

"You haven't changed much," she said. "You look a little thinner. It's becoming. You'll be very attractive when you're fifty, Peter."

"That's not very complimentary--by implication."

"Why? Oh, you mean I think you're not attractive now? Oh, but you are."

"You shouldn't say that right out to me like that."

"Why not? You know you are. But I've been thinking of what you'll look like at fifty. You'll have gray temples and you'll wear a gray suit--I saw one in a window last week and I thought that would be the one--and you'll be a very great architect."

"You really think so?"

"Why, yes." She was not flattering him. She did not seem to realize that it could be flattery. She was merely stating a fact, too certain to need emphasis.

He waited for the inevitable questions. But instead, they were talking suddenly of their old Stanton days together, and he was laughing, holding her across his knees, her thin shoulders leaning against the circle of his arm, her eyes soft, contented. He was speaking of their old bathing suits, of the runs in her stockings, of their favorite ice-cream parlor in Stanton, where they had spent so many summer evenings together--and he was thinking dimly that it made no sense at all; he had more pertinent things to tell and to ask her; people did not talk like that when they hadn't seen each other for months. But it seemed quite normal to her; she did not appear to know that they had been parted.

He was first to ask finally:

"Did you get my wire?"

"Oh, yes. Thanks."

"Don't you want to know how I'm getting along in the city?"

"Sure. How are you getting along in the city?"

"Look here, you're not terribly interested."

"Oh, but I am! I want to know everything about you."

"Why don't you ask?"

"You'll tell me when you want to."

"It doesn't matter much to you, does it?"

"What?"

"What I've been doing."

"Oh...Yes, it does, Peter. No, not too much."

"That's sweet of you!"

"But, you see, it's not what you do that matters really. It's only you."

"Me what?"

"Just you here. Or you in the city. Or you somewhere in the world. I don't know. Just that."

"You know, you're a fool, Katie. Your technique is something awful."

"My what?"

"Your technique. You can't tell a man so shamelessly, like that, that you're practically crazy about him."

"But I am."

"But you can't say so. Men won't care for you."

"But I don't want men to care for me."

"You want me to, don't you?"

"But you do, don't you?"

"I do," he said, his arms tightening about her. "Damnably. I'm a bigger fool than you are."

"Well, then it's perfectly all right," she said, her fingers in his hair, "isn't it?"

"It's always been perfectly all right, that's the strangest part about it...But look, I want to tell you about what's happened to me, because it's important."

"I'm really very interested, Peter."

"Well, you know I'm working for Francon & Heyer and...Oh, hell, you don't even know what that means!"

"Yes, I do. I've looked them up in Who's Who in Architecture. It said some very nice things about them. And I asked Uncle. He said they were tops in the business."

"You bet they are. Francon--he's the greatest designer in New York, in the whole country, in the world maybe. He's put up seventeen skyscrapers, eight cathedrals, six railroad terminals and God knows what else....Of course, you know, he's an old fool and a pompous fraud who oils his way into everything and..." He stopped, his mouth open, staring at her. He had not intended to say that. He had never allowed himself to think that before.

She was looking at him serenely. "Yes?" she asked. "And...?"

"Well...and..." he stammered, and he knew that he could not speak differently, not to her, "and that's what I really think of him. And I have no respect for him at all. And I'm delighted to be working for him. See?"

"Sure," she said quietly. "You're ambitious, Peter."

"Don't you despise me for it?"

"No. That's what you wanted."

"Sure, that's what I wanted. Well, actually, it's not as bad as that. It's a tremendous firm, the best in the city. I'm really doing good work, and Francon is very pleased with me. I'm getting ahead. I think I can have any job I want in the place eventually....Why, only tonight I took over a man's work and he doesn't know that he'll be useless soon, because...Katie! What am I saying?"

"It's all right, dear. I understand."

"If you did, you'd call me the names I deserve and make me stop it."

"No, Peter. I don't want to change you. I love you, Peter."

"God help you!"

"I know that."

"You know that? And you say it like this? Like you'd say, 'Hello, it's a beautiful evening'?"

"Well, why not? Why worry about it? I love you."

"No, don't worry about it! Don't ever worry about it!...Katie....I'll never love anyone else...."

"I know that too."

He held her close, anxiously, afraid that her weightless little body would vanish. He did not know why her presence made him confess things unconfessed in his own mind. He did not know why the victory he came here to share had faded. But it did not matter. He had a peculiar sense of freedom--her presence always lifted from him a pressure he could not define--he was alone--he was himself. All that mattered to him now was the feeling of her coarse cotton blouse against his wrist.

Then he was asking her about her own life in New York and she was speaking happily about her uncle.

"He's wonderful, Peter. He's really wonderful. He's quite poor, but he took me in and he was so gracious about it he gave up his study to make a room for me and now he has to work here, in the living room. You must meet him, Peter. He's away now, on a lecture tour, but you must meet him when he comes back."

"Sure, I'd love to."

"You know, I wanted to go to work, and be on my own, but he wouldn't let me. 'My dear child,' he said, 'not at seventeen. You don't want me to be ashamed of myself, do you? I don't believe in child labor.' That was kind of a funny idea, don't you think? He has so many funny ideas--I don't understand them all, but they say he's a brilliant man. So he made it look as if I were doing him a favor by letting him keep me, and I think that was really very decent of him."

"What do you do with yourself all day long?"

"Nothing much of anything now. I read books. On architecture. Uncle has tons of books on architecture. But when he's here I type his lectures for him. I really don't think he likes me to do it, he prefers the typist he had, but I love it and he lets me. And he pays me her salary. I didn't want to take it, but he made me."

"What does he do for a living?"

"Oh, so many things, I don't know, I can't keep track of them. He teaches art history, for one, he's a kind of professor."

"And when are you going to college, by the way?"

"Oh...Well...well, you see, I don't think Uncle approves of the idea. I told him how I'd always planned to go and that I'd work my own way through, but he seems to think it's not for me. He doesn't say much, only: 'God made the elephant for toil and the mosquito for flitting about, and it's not advisable, as a rule, to experiment with the laws of nature, however, if you want to try it, my dear child...' But he's not objecting really, it's up to me, only..."

"Well, don't let him stop you."

"Oh, he wouldn't want to stop me. Only, I was thinking, I was never any great shakes in high school, and, darling, I'm really quite utterly lousy at mathematics, and so I wonder...but then, there's no hurry, I've got plenty of time to decide."

"Listen, Katie, I don't like that. You've always planned on college. If that uncle of yours..."

"You shouldn't say it like this. You don't know him. He's the most amazing man. I've never met anyone quite like him. He's so kind, so understanding. And he's such fun, always joking, he's so clever at it, nothing that you thought was serious ever seems to be when he's around, and yet he's a very serious man. You know, he spends hours talking to me, he's never too tired and he's not bored with my stupidity, he tells me all about strikes, and conditions in the slums, and the poor people in the sweatshops, always about others, never about himself. A friend of his told me that Uncle could be a very rich man if he tried, he's so clever, but he won't, he just isn't interested in money."

"That's not human."

"Wait till you see him. Oh, he wants to meet you, too. I've told him about you. He calls you 'the T-square Romeo.'"

"Oh, he does, does he?"

"But you don't understand. He means it kindly. It's the way he says things. You'll have a lot in common. Maybe he could help you. He knows something about architecture, too. You'll love Uncle Ellsworth."

"Who?" said Keating.

"My uncle."

"Say," Keating asked, his voice a little husky, "what's your uncle's name?"

"Ellsworth Toohey. Why?" His hands fell limply. He sat staring at her. "What's the matter, Peter?"

He swallowed. She saw the jerking motion of his throat. Then he said, his voice hard:

"Listen, Katie, I don't want to meet your uncle."

"But why?"

"I don't want to meet him. Not through you....You see, Katie, you don't know me. I'm the kind that uses people. I don't want to use you. Ever. Don't let me. Not you."

"Use me how? What's the matter? Why?"

"It's just this: I'd give my eyeteeth to meet Ellsworth Toohey, that's all." He laughed harshly. "So he knows something about architecture, does he? You little fool! He's the most important man in architecture. Not yet, maybe, but that's what he'll be in a couple of years--ask Francon, that old weasel knows. He's on

his way to becoming the Napoleon of all architectural critics, your Uncle Ellsworth is, just watch him. In the first place, there aren't many to bother writing about our profession, so he's the smart boy who's going to comer the market. You should see the big shots in our office lapping up every comma he puts out in print! So you think maybe he could help me? Well, he could make me, and he will, and I'm going to meet him some day, when I'm ready for him, as I met Francon, but not here, not through you. Understand? Not from you!"

"But, Peter, why not?"

"Because I don't want it that way! Because it's filthy and I hate it, all of it, ray work and my profession, and what I'm doing and what I'm going to do! It's something I want to keep you out of. You're all I really have. Just keep out of it, Katie!"

"Out of what?"

"I don't know!"

She rose and stood in the circle of his arms, his face hidden against her hip; she stroked his hair, looking down at him.

"All right, Peter. I think I know. You don't have to meet him until you want to. Just tell me when you want it. You can use me if you have to. It's all right. It won't change anything."

When he raised his head, she was laughing softly.

"You've worked too hard, Peter. You're a little unstrung. Suppose I make you some tea?"

"Oh, I'd forgotten all about it, but I've had no dinner today. Had no time."

"Well, of all things! Well, how perfectly disgusting! Come on to the kitchen, this minute, I'll see what I can fix up for you!"

He left her two hours later, and he walked away feeling light, clean, happy, his fears forgotten, Toohey and Francon forgotten. He thought only that he had promised to come again tomorrow and that it was an unbearably long time to wait. She stood at the door, after he had gone, her hand on the knob he had touched, and she thought that he might come tomorrow--or three months later.

#

"When you finish tonight," said Henry Cameron, "I want to see you in my office."

"Yes," said Roark.

Cameron veered sharply on his heels and walked out of the drafting room. It had been the longest sentence he had addressed to Roark in a month.

Roark had come to this room every morning, had done his task, and had heard no word of comment. Cameron would enter the drafting room and stand behind Roark for a long time, looking over his shoulder. It was as if his eyes concentrated deliberately on trying to throw the steady hand off its course on the paper. The two other draftsmen botched their work from the mere thought of such an apparition standing behind them. Roark did not seem to notice it. He went on, his hand unhurried, he took his time about discarding a blunted pencil and picking out another. "Uh-huh," Cameron would grunt suddenly. Roark would turn his head then, politely attentive. "What is it?" he would ask. Cameron would

turn away without a word, his narrowed eyes underscoring contemptuously the fact that he considered an answer unnecessary, and would leave the drafting room. Roark would go on with his drawing.

"Looks bad," Loomis, the young draftsman, confided to Simpson, his ancient colleague. "The old man doesn't like this guy. Can't say that I blame him, either. Here's one that won't last long."

Simpson was old and helpless; he had survived from Cameron's three-floor office, had stuck and had never understood it Loomis was young, with the face of a drugstore-corner lout; he was here because he had been fired from too many other places.

Both men disliked Roark. He was usually disliked, from the first sight of his face, anywhere he went His face was closed like the door of a safety vault; things locked in safety vaults are valuable; men did not care to feel that. He was a cold, disquieting presence in the room; his presence had a strange quality: it made itself felt and yet it made them feel that he was not there; or perhaps that he was and they weren't.

After work he walked the long distance to his home, a tenement near the East River. He had chosen that tenement because he had been able to get, for two-fifty a week, its entire top floor, a huge room that had been used for storage: it had no ceiling and the roof leaked between its naked beams. But it had a long row of windows, along two of its walls, some panes filled with glass, others with cardboard, and the windows opened high over the river on one side and the city on the other.

A week ago Cameron had come into the drafting room and had thrown down on Roark's table a violent sketch of a country residence. "See if you can make a house out of this!" he had snapped and gone without further explanation. He had not approached Roark's table during the days that followed. Roark had finished the drawings last night and left them on Cameron's desk. This morning, Cameron had come in, thrown some sketches of steel joints to Roark, ordered him to appear in his office later and had not entered the drafting room again for the rest of the day. The others were gone. Roark pulled an old piece of oilcloth over his table and went to Cameron's office. His drawings of the country house were spread on the desk. The light of the lamp fell on Cameron's cheek, on his beard, the white threads glistening, on his fist, on a corner of the drawing, its black lines bright and hard as if embossed on the paper. "You're fired," said Cameron.

Roark stood, halfway across the long room, his weight on one leg, his arms hanging by his sides, one shoulder raised. "Am I?" he asked quietly, without moving. "Come here," said Cameron. "Sit down." Roark obeyed.

"You're too good," said Cameron. "You're too good for what you want to do with yourself. It's no use, Roark. Better now than later."

"What do you mean?"

"It's no use wasting what you've got on an ideal that you'll never reach, that they'll never let you reach. It's no use, taking that marvelous thing you have and making a torture rack for yourself out of it. Sell it, Roark. Sell it now. It won't be the same, but you've got enough in you. You've got what they'll pay you for, and pay plenty, if you use it their way. Accept them, Roark. Compromise. Compromise now, because you'll have to later, anyway, only then you'll have gone through things you'll wish you hadn't. You don't know. I do. Save yourself from that. Leave me. Go to someone else."

"Did you do that?"

"You presumptuous bastard! How good do you think I said you were? Did I tell you to compare yourself to..." He stopped because he saw that Roark was smiling.

He looked at Roark, and suddenly smiled in answer, and it was the most painful thing that Roark had ever seen.

"No," said Cameron softly, "that won't work, huh? No, it won't...Well, you're right. You're as good as you think you are. But I want to speak to you. I don't know exactly how to go about it. I've lost the habit of speaking to men like you. Lost it? Maybe I've never had it. Maybe that's what frightens me now. Will you try to understand?"

"I understand. I think you're wasting your time."

"Don't be rude. Because I can't be rude to you now. I want you to listen. Will you listen and not answer me?"

"Yes. I'm sorry. I didn't intend it as rudeness."

"You see, of all men, I'm the last one to whom you should have come. I'll be committing a crime if I keep you here. Somebody should have warned you against me. I won't help you at all. I won't discourage you. I won't teach you any common sense. Instead, I'll push you on. I'll drive you the way you're going now. I'll beat you into remaining what you are, and I'll make you worse....Don't you see? In another month I won't be able to let you go. I'm not sure I can now. So don't argue with me and go. Get out while you can."

"But can I? Don't you think it's too late for both of us? It was too late for me twelve years ago."

"Try it, Roark. Try to be reasonable for once. There's plenty of big fellows who'll take you, expulsion or no expulsion, if I say so. They may laugh at me in their luncheon speeches, but they steal from me when it suits them, and they know that I know a good draftsman when I see one. I'll give you a letter to Guy Francon. He worked for me once, long ago. I think I fired him, but that wouldn't matter. Go to him. You won't like it at first, but you'll get used to it. And you'll thank me for it many years from now."

"Why are you saying all this to me? That's not what you want to say. That's not what you did."

"That's why I'm saying it! Because that's not what I did!...Look, Roark, there's one thing about you, the thing I'm afraid of. It's not just the kind of work you do; I wouldn't care, if you were an exhibitionist who's being different as a stunt, as a lark, just to attract attention to himself. It's a smart racket, to oppose the crowd and amuse it and collect admission to the side show. If you did that, I wouldn't worry. But it's not that. You love your work. God help you, you love it! And that's the curse. That's the brand on your forehead for all of them to see. You love it, and they know it, and they know they have you. Do you ever look at the people in the street? Aren't you afraid of them? I am. They move past you and they wear hats and they carry bundles. But that's not the substance of them. The substance of them is hatred for any man who loves his work. That's the only kind they fear. I don't know why. You're opening yourself up, Roark, for each and every one of them."

"But I never notice the people in the streets."

"Do you notice what they've done to me?"

"I notice only that you weren't afraid of them. Why do you ask me to be?"

"That's just why I'm asking it!" He leaned forward, his fists closing on the desk before him. "Roark, do you want me to say it? You're cruel, aren't you? All right, I'll say it: do you want to end up like this? Do you want to be what I am?" Roark got up and stood against the edge of light on the desk. "If," said Roark, "at the end of my life, I'll be what you are today here, in this office, I shall consider it an honor that I could not have deserved."

"Sit down!" roared Cameron. "I don't like demonstrations!" Roark looked down at himself, at the desk, astonished to find himself standing. He said: "I'm sorry. I didn't know I got up."

"Well, sit down. Listen. I understand. And it's very nice of you. But you don't know. I thought a few days here would be enough to take the hero worship out of you. I see it wasn't. Here you are, saying to yourself how grand old Cameron is, a noble fighter, a martyr to a lost cause, and you'd just love to die on the barricades with me and to eat in dime lunch-wagons with me for the rest of your life. I know, it looks pure and beautiful to you now, at your great old age of twenty-two. But do you know what it means? Thirty years of a lost cause, that sounds beautiful, doesn't it? But do you know how many days there are in thirty years? Do you know what happens in those days? Roark! Do you know what happens?"

"You don't want to speak of that."

"No! I don't want to speak of that! But I'm going to. I want you to hear. I want you to know what's in store for you. There will be days when you'll look at your hands and you'll want to take something and smash every bone in them, because they'll be taunting you with what they could do, if you found a chance for them to do it, and you can't find that chance, and you can't bear your living body because it has failed those hands somewhere. There will be days when a bus driver will snap at you as you enter a bus, and he'll be only asking for a dime, but that won't be what you'll hear; you'll hear that you're nothing, that he's laughing at you, that it's written on your forehead, that thing they hate you for. There will be days when you'll stand in the corner of a hall and listen to a creature on a platform talking about buildings, about that work which you love, and the things he'll say will make you wait for somebody to rise and crack him open between two thumbnails; and then you'll hear the people applauding him, and you'll want to scream, because you won't know whether they're real or you are, whether you're in a room full of gored skulls, or whether someone has just emptied your own head, and you'll say nothing, because the sounds you could make--they're not a language in that room any longer; but if you'd want to speak, you won't anyway, because you'll be brushed aside, you who have nothing to tell them about buildings! Is that what you want?"

Roark sat still, the shadows sharp on his face, a black wedge on a sunken cheek, a long triangle of black cutting across his chin, his eyes on Cameron.

"Not enough?" asked Cameron. "All right. Then, one day, you'll see on a piece of paper before you a building that will make you want to kneel; you won't believe that you've done it, but you will have done it; then you'll think that the earth is beautiful and the air smells of spring and you love your fellow men, because there is no evil in the world. And you'll set out from your house with this drawing, to have it erected, because you won't have any doubt that it will be erected by the first man to see it. But you won't get very far from your house. Because you'll be stopped at the door by the man who's come to turn off the gas.

You hadn't had much food, because you saved money to finish your drawing, but still you had to cook something and you hadn't paid for it....All right, that's nothing, you can laugh at that. But finally you'll get into a man's office with your drawing, and you'll curse yourself for taking so much space of his air with your body, and you'll try to squeeze yourself out of his sight, so that he won't see you, but only hear your voice begging him, pleading, your voice licking his knees; you'll loathe yourself for it, but you won't care, if only he'd let you put up that building, you won't care, you'll want to rip your insides open to show him, because if he saw what's there he'd have to let you put it up. But he'll say that he's very sorry, only the commission has just been given to Guy Francon. And you'll go home, and do you know what you'll do there? You'll cry. You'll cry like a woman, like a drunkard, like an animal. That's your future, Howard Roark. Now, do you want it?"

"Yes," said Roark.

Cameron's eyes dropped; then his head moved down a little, then a little farther; his head went on dropping slowly, in long, single jerks, then stopped; he sat still, his shoulders hunched, his arms huddled together in his lap.

"Howard," whispered Cameron, "I've never told it to anyone...."

"Thank you...." said Roark.

After a long time, Cameron raised his head.

"Go home now," said Cameron, his voice flat. "You've worked too much lately. And you have a hard day ahead." He

pointed to the drawings of the country house. "This is all very well, and I wanted to see what you'd do, but it's not good enough to build. You'll have to do it over. I'll show you what I want tomorrow."

5.

A YEAR with the firm of Francon & Heyer had given Keating the whispered title of crown prince without portfolio. Still only a draftsman, he was Francon's reigning favorite. Francon took him out to lunch--an unprecedented honor for an employee. Francon called him to be present at interviews with clients. The clients seemed to like seeing so decorative a young man in an architect's office.

Lucius N. Heyer had the annoying habit of asking Francon suddenly: "When did you get the new man?" and pointing to an employee who had been there for three years. But Heyer surprised everybody by remembering Keating's name and by greeting him, whenever they met, with a smile of positive recognition. Keating had had a long conversation with him, one dreary November afternoon, on the subject of old porcelain. It was Heyer's hobby; he owned a famous collection, passionately gathered. Keating displayed an earnest knowledge of the subject, though he had never heard of old porcelain till the night before, which he had spent at the public library. Heyer was delighted; nobody in the office cared about his hobby, few ever noticed his presence. Heyer remarked to his partner: "You're certainly good at picking your men, Guy. There's one boy I wish we wouldn't lose, what's his name?--Keating."

"Yes, indeed," Francon answered, smiling, "yes, indeed."

In the drafting room, Keating concentrated on Tim Davis. Work and drawings were only unavoidable details on the surface of his days; Tim Davis was the substance and the shape of the first step in his career.

Davis let him do most of his own work; only night work, at first, then parts of his daily assignments as well; secretly, at first, then openly. Davis had not wanted it to be known. Keating made it known, with an air of naive confidence which implied that he was only a tool, no more than Tim's pencil or T-square, that his help enhanced Tim's importance rather than diminished it and, therefore, he did not wish to conceal it.

At first, Davis relayed instructions to Keating; then the chief draftsman took the arrangement for granted and began coming to Keating with orders intended for Davis. Keating was always there, smiling, saying: "I'll do it; don't bother Tim with those little things, I'll take care of it." Davis relaxed and let himself be carried along; he smoked a great deal, he lolled about, his legs twisted loosely over the rungs of a stool, his eyes closed, dreaming of Elaine; he uttered once in a while: "Is the stuff ready, Pete?"

Davis had married Elaine that spring. He was frequently late for work. He had whispered to Keating: "You're in with the old man, Pete, slip a good word for me, once in a while, will you?--so they'll overlook a few things. God, do I hate to have to be working right now!" Keating would say to Francon: "I'm sorry, Mr. Francon, that the Murray job sub-basement plans were so late, but Tim Davis had a quarrel with his wife last night, and you know how newlyweds are, you don't want to be too hard on them," or "It's Tim Davis again, Mr. Francon, do forgive him, he can't help it, he hasn't got his mind on his work at all!"

When Francon glanced at the list of his employees' salaries, he noticed that his most expensive draftsman was the man least needed in the office.

When Tim Davis lost his job, no one in the drafting room was surprised but Tim Davis. He could not understand it. He set his lips defiantly in bitterness against a world he would hate forever. He felt he had no friend on earth save Peter Keating.

Keating consoled him, cursed Francon, cursed the injustice of humanity, spent six dollars in a speak-easy, entertaining the secretary of an obscure architect of his acquaintance and arranged a new job for Tim Davis.

Whenever he thought of Davis afterward, Keating felt a warm pleasure; he had influenced the course of a human being, had thrown him off one path and pushed him into another; a human being--it was not Tim Davis to him any longer, it was a living frame and a mind, a conscious mind--why had he always feared that mysterious entity of consciousness within others?--and he had twisted that frame and that mind to his own will. By a unanimous decision of Francon, Heyer and the chief draftsman, Tim's table, position and salary were given to Peter Keating. But this was only part of his satisfaction; there was another sense of it, warmer and less real--and more dangerous. He said brightly and often: "Tim Davis? Oh yes, I got him his present job."

He wrote to his mother about it. She said to her friends: "Petey is such an unselfish boy."

He wrote to her dutifully each week; his letters were short and respectful; hers, long, detailed and full of advice which he seldom finished reading.

He saw Catherine Halsey occasionally. He had not gone to her on that following evening, as he had promised. He had awakened in the morning and remembered the

things he had said to her, and hated her for his having said them. But he had gone to her again, a week later; she had not reproached him and they had not mentioned her uncle. He saw her after that every month or two; he was happy when he saw her, but he never spoke to her of his career.

He tried to speak of it to Howard Roark; the attempt failed. He called on Roark twice; he climbed, indignantly, the five flights of stairs to Roark's room. He greeted Roark eagerly; he waited for reassurance, not knowing what sort of reassurance he needed nor why it could come only from Roark. He spoke of his job and he questioned Roark, with sincere concern, about Cameron's office. Roark listened to him, answered all his questions willingly, but Keating felt that he was knocking against a sheet of iron in Roark's unmoving eyes, and that they were not speaking about the same things at all. Before the visit was over, Keating was taking notice of Roark's frayed cuffs, of his shoes, of the patch on the knee of his trousers, and he felt satisfied. He went away chuckling, but he went away miserably uneasy, and wondered why, and swore never to see Roark again, and wondered why he knew that he would have to see him.

#

"Well," said Keating, "I couldn't quite work it to ask her to lunch, but she's coming to Mawson's exhibition with me day after tomorrow. Now what?"

He sat on the floor, his head resting against the edge of a couch, his bare feet stretched out, a pair of Guy Francon's chartreuse pyjamas floating loosely about his limbs.

Through the open door of the bathroom he saw Francon standing at the washstand, his stomach pressed to its shining edge, brushing his teeth.

"That's splendid," said Francon, munching through a thick foam of toothpaste. "That'll do just as well. Don't you see?"

"No."

"Lord, Pete, I explained it to you yesterday before we started. Mrs. Dunlop's husband's planning to build a home for her."

"Oh, yeah," said Keating weakly, brushing the matted black curls off his face. "Oh, yeah...I remember now...Jesus, Guy, I got a head on me!..."

He remembered vaguely the party to which Francon had taken him the night before, he remembered the caviar in a hollow iceberg, the black net evening gown and the pretty face of Mrs. Dunlop, but he could not remember how he had come to end up in Francon's apartment. He shrugged; he had attended many parties with Francon in the past year and had often been brought here like this.

"It's not a very large house," Francon was saying, holding the toothbrush in his mouth; it made a lump on his cheek and its green handle stuck out. "Fifty thousand or so, I understand. They're small fry anyway. But Mrs. Dunlop's brother-in-law is Quimby--you know, the big real estate fellow. Won't hurt to get a little wedge into that family, won't hurt at all. You're to see where that commission ends up, Pete. Can I count on you, Pete?"

"Sure," said Keating, his head drooping. "You can always count on me, Guy...."

He sat still, watching his bare toes and thinking of Stengel, Francon's designer. He did not want to think, but his mind leaped to Stengel automatically, as it always did, because Stengel represented his next step.

Stengel was impregnable to friendship. For two years, Keating's attempts had broken against the ice of Stengel's glasses. What Stengel thought of him was whispered in the drafting rooms, but few dared to repeat it save in quotes; Stengel said it aloud, even though he knew that the corrections his sketches bore, when they returned to him from Francon's office, were made by Keating's hand. But Stengel had a vulnerable point: he had been planning for some time to leave Francon and open an office of his own. He had selected a partner, a young architect of no talent but of great inherited wealth. Stengel was waiting only for a chance. Keating had thought about this a great deal. He could think of nothing else. He thought of it again, sitting there on the floor of Francon's bedroom.

Two days later, when he escorted Mrs. Dunlop through the gallery exhibiting the paintings of one Frederic Mawson, his course of action was set. He piloted her through the sparse crowd, his fingers closing over her elbow once in a while, letting her catch his eyes directed at her young face more often than at the paintings.

"Yes," he said as she stared obediently at a landscape featuring an auto dump and tried to compose her face into the look of admiration expected of her; "magnificent work. Note the colors, Mrs. Dunlop....They say this fellow Mawson had a terribly hard time. It's an old story--trying to get recognition. Old and heartbreaking. It's the same in all the arts. My own profession included."

"Oh, indeed?" said Mrs. Dunlop, who quite seemed to prefer architecture at the moment.

"Now this," said Keating, stopping before the depiction of an old hag picking at her bare toes on a street curb, "this is art as a social document. It takes a person of courage to appreciate this."

"It's simply wonderful," said Mrs. Dunlop.

"Ah, yes, courage. It's a rare quality....They say Mawson was starving in a garret when Mrs. Stuyvesant discovered him. It's glorious to be able to help young talent on its way."

"It must be wonderful," agreed Mrs. Dunlop.

"If I were rich," said Keating wistfully, "I'd make it my hobby: to arrange an exhibition for a new artist, to finance the concert of a new pianist, to have a house built by a new architect...."

"Do you know, Mr. Keating?--my husband and I are planning to build a little home on Long Island."

"Oh, are you? How very charming of you, Mrs. Dunlop, to confess such a thing to me. You're so young, if you'll forgive my saying this. Don't you know that you run the danger of my becoming a nuisance and trying to interest you in my firm? Or are you safe and have chosen an architect already?"

"No, I'm not safe at all," said Mrs. Dunlop prettily, "and I wouldn't mind the danger really. I've thought a great deal about the firm of Francon & Heyer in these last few days. And I've heard they are so terribly good."

"Why, thank you, Mrs. Dunlop."

"Mr. Francon is a great architect."

"Oh, yes."

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. Nothing really."

"No, what's the matter?"

"Do you really want me to tell you?"

"Why, certainly."

"Well, you see, Guy Francon--it's only a name. He would have nothing to do with your house. It's one of those professional secrets that I shouldn't divulge, but I don't know what it is about you that makes me want to be honest. All the best buildings in our office are designed by Mr. Stengel."

"Who?"

"Claude Stengel. You've never heard the name, but you will, when someone has the courage to discover him. You see, he does all the work, he's the real genius behind the scenes, but Francon puts his signature on it and gets all the credit. That's the way it's done everywhere."

"But why does Mr. Stengel stand for it?"

"What can he do? No one will give him a start. You know how most people are, they stick to the beaten path, they pay three times the price for the same thing, just to have the trademark. Courage, Mrs. Dunlop, they lack courage. Stengel is a great artist, but there are so few discerning people to see it. He's ready to go on his own, if only he could find some outstanding person like Mrs. Stuyvesant to give him a chance."

"Really?" said Mrs. Dunlop. "How very interesting! Tell me more about it."

He told her a great deal more about it. By the time they had finished the inspection of the works of Frederic Mawson, Mrs. Dunlop was shaking Keating's hand and saying:

"It's so kind, so very unusually kind of you. Are you sure that it won't embarrass you with your office if you arrange for me to meet Mr. Stengel? I didn't quite dare to suggest it and it was so kind of you not to be angry at me. It's so unselfish of you and more than anyone else would have done in your position."

When Keating approached Stengel with the suggestion of a proposed luncheon, the man listened to him without a word. Then he jerked his head and snapped:

"What's in it for you?"

Before Keating could answer, Stengel threw his head back suddenly.

"Oh," said Stengel. "Oh, I see."

Then he leaned forward, his mouth drawn thin in contempt:

"Okay. I'll go to that lunch."

When Stengel left the firm of Francon & Heyer to open his own office and proceed

with the construction of the Dunlop house, his first commission, Guy Francon smashed a ruler against the edge of his desk and roared to Keating:

"The bastard! The abysmal bastard! After all I've done for him."

"What did you expect?" said Keating, sprawled in a low armchair before him. "Such is life."

"But what beats me is how did that little skunk ever hear of it? To snatch it right from under our nose!"

"Well, I've never trusted him anyway." Keating shrugged. "Human nature..."

The bitterness in his voice was sincere. He had received no gratitude from Stengel. Stengel's parting remark to him had been only: "You're a worse bastard than I thought you were. Good luck. You'll be a great architect some day."

Thus Keating achieved the position of chief designer for Francon & Heyer.

Francon celebrated the occasion with a modest little orgy at one of the quieter and costlier restaurants. "In a coupla years," he kept repeating, "in a coupla years you'll see things happenin'. Pete.... You're a good boy and I like you and I'll do things for you.... Haven't I done things for you?... You're going places, Pete... in a coupla years...."

"Your tie's crooked, Guy," said Keating dryly, "and you're spilling brandy all over your vest...."

Facing his first task of designing, Keating thought of Tim Davis, of Stengel, of many others who had wanted it, had struggled for it, had tried, had been beaten--by him. It was a triumphant feeling. It was a tangible affirmation of his greatness. Then he found himself suddenly in his glass-enclosed office, looking down at a blank sheet of paper--alone. Something rolled in his throat down to his stomach, cold and empty, his old feeling of the dropping hole. He leaned against the table, closing his eyes. It had never been quite real to him before that this was the thing actually expected of him--to fill a sheet of paper, to create something on a sheet of paper.

It was only a small residence. But instead of seeing it rise before him, he saw it sinking; he saw its shape as a pit in the ground; and as a pit within him; as emptiness, with only Davis and Stengel rattling uselessly within it. Francon had said to him about the building: "It must have dignity, you know, dignity...nothing freaky...a structure of elegance...and stay within the budget," which was Francon's conception of giving his designer ideas and letting him work them out. Through a cold stupor, Keating thought of the clients laughing in his face; he heard the thin, omnipotent voice of Ellsworth Toohey calling his attention to the opportunities open to him in the field of plumbing. He hated every piece of stone on the face of the earth. He hated himself for having chosen to be an architect.

When he began to draw, he tried not to think of the job he was doing; he thought only that Francon had done it, and Stengel, even Heyer, and all the others, and that he could do it, if they could.

He spent many days on his preliminary sketches. He spent long hours in the library of Francon & Heyer, selecting from Classic photographs the appearance of his house. He felt the tension melting in his mind. It was right and it was good, that house growing under his hand, because men were still worshipping the masters who had done it before him. He did not have to wonder, to fear or to

take chances; it had been done for him.

When the drawings were ready, he stood looking at them uncertainly. Were he to be told that this was the best or the ugliest house in the world, he would agree with either. He was not sure. He had to be sure. He thought of Stanton and of what he had relied upon when working on his assignments there. He telephoned Cameron's office and asked for Howard Roark.

He came to Roark's room, that night, and spread before him the plans, the elevations, the perspective of his first building. Roark stood over it, his arms spread wide, his hands holding the edge of the table, and he said nothing for a long time.

Keating waited anxiously; he felt anger growing with his anxiety--because he could see no reason for being so anxious. When he couldn't stand it, he spoke:

"You know, Howard, everybody says Stengel's the best designer in town, and I don't think he was really ready to quit, but I made him and I took his place. I had to do some pretty fine thinking to work that, I..."

He stopped. It did not sound bright and proud, as it would have sounded anywhere else. It sounded like begging.

Roark turned and looked at him. Roark's eyes were not contemptuous; only a little wider than usual, attentive and puzzled. He said nothing and turned back to the drawings.

Keating felt naked. Davis, Stengel, Francon meant nothing here. People were his protection against people. Roark had no sense of people. Others gave Keating a feeling of his own value. Roark gave him nothing. He thought that he should seize his drawings and run. The danger was not Roark. The danger was that he, Keating, remained. Roark turned to him.

"Do you enjoy doing this sort of thing, Peter?" he asked. "Oh, I know," said Keating, his voice shrill, "I know you don't approve of it, but this is business, I just want to know what you think of this practically, not philosophically, not..."

"No, I'm not going to preach to you. I was only wondering."

"If you could help me, Howard, if you could just help me with it a little. It's my first house, and it means so much to me at the office, and I'm not sure. What do you think? Will you help me, Howard?"

"All right."

Roark threw aside the sketch of the graceful facade with the fluted pilasters, the broken pediments, the Roman fasces over the windows and the two eagles of Empire by the entrance. He picked up the plans. He took a sheet of tracing paper, threw it over the plan and began to draw. Keating stood watching the pencil in Roark's hand. He saw his imposing entrance foyer disappearing, his twisted corridors, his lightless corners; he saw an immense living room growing in the space he had thought too limited; a wall of giant windows facing the garden, a spacious kitchen. He watched for a long time. "And the facade?" he asked, when Roark threw the pencil down. "I can't help you with that. If you must have it Classic, have it good Classic at least. You don't need three pilasters where one will do. And take those ducks off the door, it's too much."

Keating smiled at him gratefully, when he was leaving, his drawings under his

arm; he descended the stairs, hurt and angry; he worked for three days making new plans from Roark's sketches, and a new, simpler elevation; and he presented his house to Francon with a proud gesture that looked like a flourish. "Well," said Francon, studying it, "well, I declare!...What an imagination you have, Peter...I wonder...It's a bit daring, but I wonder..." He coughed and added: "It's just what I had in mind."

"Of course," said Keating. "I studied your buildings, and I tried to think of what you'd do, and if it's good, it's because I think I know how to catch your ideas."

Francon smiled. And Keating thought suddenly that Francon did not really believe it and knew that Keating did not believe it, and yet they were both contented, bound tighter together by a common method and a common guilt.

#

The letter on Cameron's desk informed him regretfully that after earnest consideration, the board of directors of the Security Trust Company had not been able to accept his plans for the building to house the new Astoria branch of the Company and that the commission had been awarded to the firm of Gould & Pettingill. A check was attached to the letter, in payment for his preliminary drawings, as agreed; the amount was not enough to cover the expense of making those drawings.

The letter lay spread out on the desk. Cameron sat before it, drawn back, not touching the desk, his hands gathered in his lap, the back of one in the palm of the other, the fingers tight. It was only a small piece of paper, but he sat huddled and still, because it seemed to be a supernatural thing, like radium, sending forth rays that would hurt him if he moved and exposed his skin to them.

For three months, he had awaited the commission of the Security Trust Company. One after another, the chances that had loomed before him at rare intervals, in the last two years, had vanished, looming in vague promises, vanishing in firm refusals. One of his draftsmen had had to be discharged long ago. The landlord had asked questions, politely at first, then dryly, then rudely and openly. But no one in the office had minded that nor the usual arrears in salaries: there had been the commission of the Security Trust Company. The vice-president, who had asked Cameron to submit drawings, had said: "I know, some of the directors won't see it as I do. But go ahead, Mr. Cameron. Take the chance with me and I'll fight for you."

Cameron had taken the chance. He and Roark had worked savagely--to have the plans ready on time, before time, before Gould & Pettingill could submit theirs. Pettingill was a cousin of the Bank president's wife and a famous authority on the ruins of Pompeii; the Bank president was an ardent admirer of Julius Caesar and had once, while in Rome, spent an hour and a quarter in reverent inspection of the Coliseum.

Cameron and Roark and a pot of black coffee had lived in the office from dawn till frozen dawn for many days, and Cameron had thought involuntarily of the electric bill, but made himself forget it. The lights still burned in the drafting room in the early hours when he sent Roark out for sandwiches, and Roark found gray morning in the streets while it was still night in the office, in the windows facing a high brick wall. On the last day, it was Roark who had ordered Cameron home after midnight, because Cameron's hands were jerking and his knees kept seeking the tall drafting stool for support, leaning against it with a slow, cautious, sickening precision. Roark had taken him down to a taxi and in the light of a street lamp Cameron had seen Roark's face, drawn, the eyes kept wide artificially, the lips dry. The next morning Cameron had entered the

drafting room, and found the coffee pot on the floor, on its side over a black puddle, and Roark's hand in the puddle, palm up, fingers half closed, Roark's body stretched out on the floor, his head thrown back, fast asleep. On the table, Cameron had found the plans, finished....

He sat looking at the letter on his desk. The degradation was that he could not think of those nights behind him, he could not think of the building that should have risen in Astoria and of the building that would now take its place; it was that he thought only of the bill unpaid to the electric company....

In these last two years Cameron had disappeared from his office for weeks at a time, and Roark had not found him at home, and had known what was happening, but could only wait, hoping for Cameron's safe return. Then, Cameron had lost even the shame of his agony, and had come to his office reeling, recognizing no one, openly drunk and flaunting it before the walls of the only place on earth he had respected.

Roark learned to face his own landlord with the quiet statement that he could not pay him for another week; the landlord was afraid of him and did not insist. Peter Keating heard of it somehow, as he always heard everything he wanted to know. He came to Roark's unheated room, one evening, and sat down, keeping his overcoat on. He produced a wallet, pulled out five ten-dollar bills, and handed them to Roark. "You need it, Howard. I know you need it. Don't start protesting now. You can pay me back any time." Roark looked at him, astonished, took the money, saying: "Yes, I need it. Thank you, Peter." Then Keating said: "What in hell are you doing, wasting yourself on old Cameron? What do you want to live like this for? Chuck it, Howard, and come with us. All I have to do is say so. Francon'll be delighted. We'll start you at sixty a week." Roark took the money out of his pocket and handed it back to him. "Oh, for God's sake, Howard! I...I didn't mean to offend you."

"I didn't either."

"But please, Howard, keep it anyway."

"Good night, Peter."

Roark was thinking of that when Cameron entered the drafting room, the letter from the Security Trust Company in his hand. He gave the letter to Roark, said nothing, turned and walked back to his office. Roark read the letter and followed him. Whenever they lost another commission Roark knew that Cameron wanted to see him in the office, but not to speak of it; just to see him there, to talk of other things, to lean upon the reassurance of his presence.

On Cameron's desk Roark saw a copy of the New York Banner.

It was the leading newspaper of the great Wynand chain. It was a paper he would have expected to find in a kitchen, in a barbershop, in a third-rate drawing room, in the subway; anywhere but in Cameron's office. Cameron saw him looking at it and grinned.

"Picked it up this morning, on my way here. Funny, isn't it? I didn't know we'd...get that letter today. And yet it seems appropriate together--this paper and that letter. Don't know what made me buy it. A sense of symbolism, I suppose. Look at it, Howard. It's interesting."

Roark glanced through the paper. The front page carried the picture of an unwed mother with thick glistening lips, who had shot her lover; the picture headed the first installment of her autobiography and a detailed account of her trial.

The other pages ran a crusade against utility companies; a daily horoscope; extracts from church sermons; recipes for young brides; pictures of girls with beautiful legs; advice on how to hold a husband; a baby contest; a poem proclaiming that to wash dishes was nobler than to write a symphony; an article proving that a woman who had borne a child was automatically a saint.

"That's our answer, Howard. That's the answer given to you and to me. This paper. That it exists and that it's liked. Can you fight that? Have you any words to be heard and understood by that? They shouldn't have sent us the letter. They should have sent a copy of Wynand's Banner. It would be simpler and clearer. Do you know that in a few years that incredible bastard, Gail Wynand, will rule the world? It will be a beautiful world. And perhaps he's right."

Cameron held the paper outstretched, weighing it on the palm of his hand.

"To give them what they want, Howard, and to let them worship you for it, for licking their feet--or...or what? What's the use?...Only it doesn't matter, nothing matters, not even that it doesn't matter to me any more...." Then he looked at Roark. He added:

"If only I could hold on until I've started you on your own, Howard...."

"Don't speak of that."

"I want to speak of that.... It's funny, Howard, next spring it will be three years that you've been here. Seems so much longer, doesn't it? Well, have I taught you anything? I'll tell you: I've taught you a great deal and nothing. No one can teach you anything, not at the core, at the source of it. What you're doing--it's yours, not mine, I can only teach you to do it better. I can give you the means, but the aim--the aim's your own. You won't be a little disciple putting up anemic little things in early Jacobean or late Cameron. What you'll be...if only I could live to see it!"

"You'll live to see it. And you know it now." Cameron stood looking at the bare walls of his office, at the white piles of bills on his desk, at the sooty rain trickling slowly down the windowpanes.

"I have no answer to give them, Howard. I'm leaving you to face them. You'll answer them. All of them, the Wynand papers and what makes the Wynand papers possible and what lies behind that. It's a strange mission to give you. I don't know what our answer is to be. I know only that there is an answer and that you're holding it, that you're the answer, Howard, and some day you'll find the words for it."

6.

SERMONS IN STONE by Ellsworth M. Toohey was published in January of the year 1925.

It had a fastidious jacket of midnight blue with plain silver letters and a silver pyramid in one corner. It was subtitled "Architecture for Everybody" and its success was sensational. It presented the entire history of architecture, from mud hut to skyscraper, in the terms of the man in the street, but it made these terms appear scientific. Its author stated in his preface that it was an attempt "to bring architecture where it belongs--to the people." He stated further that he wished to see the average man "think and speak of architecture as he speaks of baseball." He did not bore his readers with the technicalities

of the Five Orders, the post and lintel, the flying buttress or reinforced concrete. He filled his pages with homey accounts of the daily life of the Egyptian housekeeper, the Roman shoe-cobbler, the mistress of Louis XIV, what they ate, how they washed, where they shopped and what effect their buildings had upon their existence. But he gave his readers the impression that they were learning all they had to know about the Five Orders and the reinforced concrete. He gave his readers the impression that there were no problems, no achievements, no reaches of thought beyond the common daily routine of people nameless in the past as they were in the present; that science had no goal and no expression beyond its influence on this routine; that merely by living through their own obscure days his readers were representing and achieving all the highest objectives of any civilization. His scientific precision was impeccable and his erudition astounding; no one could refute him on the cooking utensils of Babylon or the doormats of Byzantium. He wrote with the flash and the color of a first-hand observer. He did not plod laboriously through the centuries; he danced, said the critics, down the road of the ages, as a jester, a friend and a prophet.

He said that architecture was truly the greatest of the arts, because it was anonymous, as all greatness. He said that the world had many famous buildings, but few renowned builders, which was as it should be, since no one man had ever created anything of importance in architecture, or elsewhere, for that matter. The few whose names had lived were really impostors, expropriating the glory of the people as others expropriated its wealth. "When we gaze at the magnificence of an ancient monument and ascribe its achievement to one man, we are guilty of spiritual embezzlement. We forget the army of craftsmen, unknown and unsung, who preceded him in the darkness of the ages, who toiled humbly--all heroism is humble--each contributing his small share to the common treasure of his time. A great building is not the private invention of some genius or other. It is merely a condensation of the spirit of a people."

He explained that the decadence of architecture had come when private property replaced the communal spirit of the Middle Ages, and that the selfishness of individual owners--who built for no purpose save to satisfy their own bad taste, "all claim to an individual taste is bad taste"--had ruined the planned effect of cities. He demonstrated that there was no such thing as free will, since men's creative impulses were determined, as all else, by the economic structure of the epoch in which they lived. He expressed admiration for all the great historical styles, but admonished against their wanton mixture. He dismissed modern architecture, stating that: "So far, it has represented nothing but the whim of isolated individuals, has borne no relation to any great, spontaneous mass movement, and as such is of no consequence." He predicted a better world to come, where all men would be brothers and their buildings would become harmonious and all alike, in the great tradition of Greece, "the Mother of Democracy." When he wrote this, he managed to convey--with no tangible break in the detached calm of his style--that the words now seen in ordered print had been blurred in manuscript by a hand unsteady with emotion. He called upon architects to abandon their selfish quest for individual glory and dedicate themselves to the embodiment of the mood of their people. "Architects are servants, not leaders. They are not to assert their little egos, but to express the soul of their country and the rhythm of their time. They are not to follow the delusions of their personal fancy, but to seek the common denominator, which will bring their work close to the heart of the masses. Architects--ah, my friends, theirs is not to reason why. Theirs is not to command, but to be commanded."

The advertisements for *Sermons in Stone* carried quotations from critics: "Magnificent!"

"A stupendous achievement!"

"Unequaled in all art history!"

"Your chance to get acquainted with a charming man and a profound thinker."

"Mandatory reading for anyone aspiring to the title of intellectual."

There seemed to be a great many aspiring to that title. Readers acquired erudition without study, authority without cost, judgment without effort. It was pleasant to look at buildings and criticize them with a professional manner and with the memory of page 439; to hold artistic discussions and exchange the same sentences from the same paragraphs. In distinguished drawing rooms one could soon hear it said: "Architecture? Oh, yes, Ellsworth Toohey."

According to his principles, Ellsworth M. Toohey listed no architect by name in the text of his book--"the myth-building, hero-worshipping method of historical research has always been obnoxious to me." The names appeared only in footnotes. Several of these referred to Guy Francon, "who has a tendency to the overornate, but must be commended for his loyalty to the strict tradition of Classicism." One note referred to Henry Cameron, "prominent once as one of the fathers of the so-called modern school of architecture and relegated since to a well-deserved oblivion. Vox populi vox dei."

In February of 1925 Henry Cameron retired from practice.

For a year, he had known that the day would come. He had not spoken of it to Roark, but they both knew and went on, expecting nothing save to go on as long as it was still possible. A few commissions had dribbled into their office in the past year, country cottages, garages, remodeling of old buildings. They took anything. But the drops stopped. The pipes were dry. The water had been turned off by a society to whom Cameron had never paid his bill.

Simpson and the old man in the reception room had been dismissed long ago. Only Roark remained, to sit still through the winter evenings and look at Cameron's body slumped over his desk, arms flung out, head on arms, a bottle glistening under the lamp.

Then, one day in February, when Cameron had touched no alcohol for weeks, he reached for a book on a shelf and collapsed at Roark's feet, suddenly, simply, finally. Roark took him home and the doctor stated that an attempt to leave his bed would be all the death sentence Cameron needed. Cameron knew it. He lay still on his pillow, his hands dropped obediently one at each side of his body, his eyes unblinking and empty. Then he said:

"You'll close the office for me, Howard, will you?"

"Yes," said Roark.

Cameron closed his eyes, and would say nothing else, and Roark sat all night by his bed, not knowing whether the old man slept or not.

A sister of Cameron's appeared from somewhere in New Jersey. She was a meek little old lady with white hair, trembling hands and a face one could never remember, quiet, resigned and gently hopeless. She had a meager little income and she assumed the responsibility of taking her brother to her home in New Jersey; she had never been married and had no one else in the world; she was neither glad nor sorry of the burden; she had lost all capacity for emotion many years ago.

On the day of his departure Cameron handed to Roark a letter he had written in the night, written painfully, an old drawing board on his knees, a pillow propping his back. The letter was addressed to a prominent architect; it was Roark's introduction to a job. Roark read it and, looking at Cameron, not at his own hands, tore the letter across, folded the pieces and tore it again. "No," said Roark. "You're not going to ask them for anything. Don't worry about me."

Cameron nodded and kept silent for a long time. Then he said:

"You'll close up the office, Howard. You'll let them keep the furniture for their rent. But you'll take the drawing that's on the wall in my room there and you'll ship it to me. Only that. You'll burn everything else. All the papers, the files, the drawings, the contracts, everything."

"Yes," said Roark.

Miss Cameron came with the orderlies and the stretcher, and they rode in an ambulance to the ferry. At the entrance to the ferry, Cameron said to Roark:

"You're going back now." He added: "You'll come to see me, Howard....Not too often..."

Roark turned and walked away, while they were carrying Cameron to the pier. It was a gray morning and there was the cold, rotting smell of the sea in the air. A gull dipped low over the street, gray like a floating piece of newspaper, against a corner of damp, streaked stone.

That evening, Roark went to Cameron's closed office. He did not turn on the lights. He made a fire in the Franklin heater in Cameron's room, and emptied drawer after drawer into the fire, not looking down at them. The papers rustled dryly in the silence, a thin odor of mold rose through the dark room, and the fire hissed, crackling, leaping in bright streaks. At times a white flake with charred edges would flutter out of the flames. He pushed it back with the end of a steel ruler.

There were drawings of Cameron's famous buildings and of buildings unbuilt; there were blueprints with the thin white lines that were girders still standing somewhere; there were contracts with famous signatures; and at times, from out of the red glow, there flashed a sum of seven figures written on yellowed paper, flashed and went down, in a thin burst of sparks.

From among the letters in an old folder, a newspaper clipping fluttered to the floor. Roark picked it up. It was dry, brittle and yellow, and it broke at the folds, in his fingers. It was an interview given by Henry Cameron, dated May 7, 1892. It said: "Architecture is not a business, not a career, but a crusade and a consecration to a joy that justifies the existence of the earth." He dropped the clipping into the fire and reached for another folder.

He gathered every stub of pencil from Cameron's desk and threw them in also.

He stood over the heater. He did not move, he did not look down; he felt the movement of the glow, a faint shudder at the edge of his vision. He looked at the drawing of the skyscraper that had never been built, hanging on the wall before him.

#

It was Peter Keating's third year with the firm of Francon & Heyer. He carried his head high, his body erect with studied uprightness; he looked like the

picture of a successful young man in advertisements for high-priced razors or medium-priced cars.

He dressed well and watched people noticing it. He had an apartment off Park Avenue, modest but fashionable, and he bought three valuable etchings as well as a first edition of a classic he had never read nor opened since. Occasionally, he escorted clients to the Metropolitan Opera. He appeared, once, at a fancy-dress Arts Ball and created a sensation by his costume of a medieval stonemason, scarlet velvet and tights; he was mentioned in a society-page account of the event--the first mention of his name in print--and he saved the clipping.

He had forgotten his first building, and the fear and doubt of its birth. He had learned that it was so simple. His clients would accept anything, so long as he gave them an imposing facade, a majestic entrance and a regal drawing room, with which to astound their guests. It worked out to everyone's satisfaction: Keating did not care so long as his clients were impressed, the clients did not care so long as their guests were impressed, and the guests did not care anyway.

Mrs. Keating rented her house in Stanton and came to live with him in New York. He did not want her; he could not refuse--because she was his mother and he was not expected to refuse. He met her with some eagerness; he could at least impress her by his rise in the world. She was not impressed; she inspected his rooms, his clothes, his bank books and said only: "It'll do, Petey--for the time being."

She made one visit to his office and departed within a half-hour. That evening he had to sit still, squeezing and cracking his knuckles, for an hour and a half, while she gave him advice. "That fellow Whithers had a much more expensive suit than yours, Petey. That won't do. You've got to watch your prestige before those boys. The little one who brought in those blueprints--I didn't like the way he spoke to you....Oh, nothing, nothing, only I'd keep my eye on him....The one with the long nose is no friend of yours....Never mind, I just know....Watch out for the one they called Bennett. I'd get rid of him if I were you. He's ambitious. I know the signs...."

Then she asked:

"Guy Francon...has he any children?"

"One daughter."

"Oh..." said Mrs. Keating. "What is she like?"

"I've never met her."

"Really, Peter," she said, "it's downright rude to Mr. Francon if you've made no effort to meet his family."

"She's been away at college, Mother. I'll meet her some day. It's getting late, Mother, and I've got a lot of work to do tomorrow...."

But he thought of it that night and the following day. He had thought of it before and often. He knew that Francon's daughter had graduated from college long ago and was now working on the Banner, where she wrote a small column on home decoration. He had been able to learn nothing else about her. No one in the office seemed to know her. Francon never spoke of her.

On that following day, at luncheon, Keating decided to face the subject.

"I hear such nice things about your daughter," he said to

Francon. "Where did you hear nice things about her?" Francon asked ominously.

"Oh, well, you know how it is, one hears things. And she writes brilliantly."

"Yes, she writes brilliantly." Francon's mouth snapped shut.

"Really, Guy, I'd love to meet her."

Francon looked at him and sighed wearily.

"You know she's not living with me," said Francon. "She has an apartment of her own--I'm not sure that I even remember the address....Oh, I suppose you'll meet her some day. You won't like her, Peter."

"Now, why do you say that?"

"It's one of those things, Peter. As a father I'm afraid I'm a total failure....Say, Peter, what did Mrs. Mannering say about that new stairway arrangement?"

Keating felt angry, disappointed--and relieved. He looked at Francon's squat figure and wondered what appearance his daughter must have inherited to earn her father's so obvious disfavor. Rich and ugly as sin--like most of them, he decided. He thought that this need not stop him--some day. He was glad only that the day was postponed. He thought, with new eagerness, that he would go to see Catherine tonight.

Mrs. Keating had met Catherine in Stanton. She had hoped that Peter would forget. Now she knew that he had not forgotten, even though he seldom spoke of Catherine and never brought her to his home. Mrs. Keating did not mention Catherine by name. But she chatted about penniless girls who hooked brilliant young men, about promising boys whose careers had been wrecked by marriage to the wrong woman; and she read to him every newspaper account of a celebrity divorcing his plebeian wife who could not live up to his eminent position.

Keating thought, as he walked toward Catherine's house that night, of the few times he had seen her; they had been such unimportant occasions, but they were the only days he remembered of his whole life in New York.

He found, in the middle of her uncle's living room, when she let him in, a mess of letters spread all over the carpet, a portable typewriter, newspapers, scissors, boxes and a pot of glue.

"Oh dear!" said Catherine, flopping limply down on her knees in the midst of the litter. "Oh dear!"

She looked up at him, smiling disarmingly, her hands raised and spread over the crinkling white piles. She was almost twenty now and looked no older than she had looked at seventeen.

"Sit down, Peter. I thought I'd be through before you came, but I guess I'm not. It's Uncle's fan mail and his press clippings. I've got to sort it out, and answer it and file it and write notes of thanks and...Oh, you should see some of the things people write to him! It's wonderful. Don't stand there. Sit down, will you? I'll be through in a minute."

"You're through right now," he said, picking her up in his arms, carrying her to a chair.

He held her and kissed her and she laughed happily, her head buried on his shoulder. He said:

"Katie, you're an impossible little fool and your hair smells so nice!"

She said: "Don't move, Peter. I'm comfortable."

"Katie, I want to tell you, I had a wonderful time today. They opened the Bordman Building officially this afternoon. You know, down on Broadway, twenty-two floors and a Gothic spire. Francon had indigestion, so I went there as his representative. I designed that building anyway and...Oh, well, you know nothing about it."

"But I do, Peter. I've seen all your buildings. I have pictures of them. I cut them out of the papers. And I'm making a scrap-book, just like Uncle's. Oh, Peter, it's so wonderful!"

"What?"

"Uncle's scrapbooks, and his letters...all this..." She stretched her hands out over the papers on the floor, as if she wanted to embrace them. "Think of it, all these letters coming from all over the country, perfect strangers and yet he means so much to them. And here I am, helping him, me, just nobody, and look what a responsibility I have! It's so touching and so big, what do they matter--all the little things that can happen to us?--when this concerns a whole nation!"

"Yeah? Did he tell you that?"

"He told me nothing at all. But you can't live with him for years without getting some of that...that wonderful selflessness of his." He wanted to be angry, but he saw her twinkling smile, her new kind of fire, and he had to smile in answer.

"I'll say this, Katie: it's becoming to you, becoming as hell. You know, you could look stunning if you learned something about clothes. One of these days, I'll take you bodily and drag you down to a good dressmaker. I want you to meet Guy Francon some day. You'll like him."

"Oh? I thought you said once that I wouldn't."

"Did I say that? Well, I didn't really know him. He's a grand fellow. I want you to meet them all. You'd be...hey, where are you going?" She had noticed the watch on his wrist and was edging away from him.

"I...It's almost nine o'clock, Peter, and I've got to have this finished before Uncle Ellsworth gets home. He'll be back by eleven, he's making a speech at a labor meeting tonight. I can work while we're talking, do you mind?"

"I certainly do! To hell with your dear uncle's fans! Let him untangle it all himself. You stay just where you are."

She sighed, but put her head on his shoulder obediently. "You mustn't talk like that about Uncle Ellsworth. You don't understand him at all. Have you read his book?"

"Yes! I've read his book and it's grand, it's stupendous, but I've heard nothing but talk of his damn book everywhere I go, so do you mind if we change the subject?"

"You still don't want to meet Uncle Ellsworth?"

"Why? What makes you say that? I'd love to meet him."

"Oh..."

"What's the matter?"

"You said once that you didn't want to meet him through me."

"Did I? How do you always remember all the nonsense I happen to say?"

"Peter, I don't want you to meet Uncle Ellsworth."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. It's kind of silly of me. But now I just don't

want you to. I don't know why."

"Well, forget it then. I'll meet him when the time comes. Katie, listen, yesterday I was standing at the window in my room, and I thought of you, and I wanted so much to have you with me, I almost called you, only it was too late. I get so terribly lonely for you like that, I..."

She listened, her arms about his neck. And then he saw her looking suddenly past him, her mouth opened in consternation; she jumped up, dashed across the room, and crawled on her hands and knees to reach a lavender envelope lying under a desk.

"Now what on earth?" he demanded angrily.

"It's a very important letter," she said, still kneeling, the envelope held tightly in her little fist, "it's a very important letter and there it was, practically in the wastebasket, I might have swept it out without noticing. It's from a poor widow who has five children and her eldest son wants to be an architect and Uncle Ellsworth is going to arrange a scholarship for him."

"Well," said Keating, rising, "I've had just about enough of this. Let's get out of here, Katie. Let's go for a walk. It's beautiful out tonight. You don't seem to belong to yourself in here."

"Oh, fine! Let's go for a walk."

Outside, there was a mist of snow, a dry, fine, weightless snow that hung still in the air, filling the narrow tanks of streets. They walked together, Catherine's arm pressed to his, their feet leaving long brown smears on the white sidewalks.

They sat down on a bench in Washington Square. The snow enclosed the Square, cutting them off from the houses, from the city beyond. Through the shadow of the arch, little dots of light rolled past them, steel-white, green and smeared red.

She sat huddled close to him. He looked at the city. He had always been afraid

of it and he was afraid of it now; but he had two fragile protections: the snow and the girl beside him. "Katie," he whispered, "Katie..."

"I love you, Peter...."

"Katie," he said, without hesitation, without emphasis, because the certainty of his words allowed no excitement, "we're engaged, aren't we?"

He saw her chin move faintly as it dropped and rose to form one word.

"Yes," she said calmly, so solemnly that the word sounded indifferent.

She had never allowed herself to question the future, for a question would have been an admission of doubt. But she knew, when she pronounced the "yes," that she had waited for this and that she would shatter it if she were too happy.

"In a year or two," he said holding her hand tightly, "we'll be married. Just as soon as I'm on my feet and set with the firm for good. I have mother to take care of, but in another year it will be all right." He tried to speak as coldly, as practically as he could, not to spoil the wonder of what he felt. "I'll wait, Peter," she whispered. "We don't have to hurry."

"We won't tell anyone, Katie....It's our secret, just ours until..." And suddenly a thought came to him, and he realized, aghast, that he could not prove it had never occurred to him before; yet he knew, in complete honesty, even though it did astonish him, that he had never thought of this before. He pushed her aside. He said angrily: "Katie! You won't think that it's because of that great, damnable uncle of yours?"

She laughed; the sound was light and unconcerned, and he knew that he was vindicated.

"Lord, no, Peter! He won't like it, of course, but what do we care?"

"He won't like it? Why?"

"Oh, I don't think he approves of marriage. Not that he preaches anything immoral, but he's always told me marriage is old-fashioned, an economic device to perpetuate the institution of private property, or something like that or anyway that he doesn't like it."

"Well, that's wonderful! We'll show him."

In all sincerity, he was glad of it. It removed, not from his mind which he knew to be innocent, but from all other minds where it could occur, the suspicion that there had been in his feeling for her any hint of such considerations as applied to...to Francon's daughter, for instance. He thought it was strange that this should seem so important; that he should wish so desperately to keep his feeling for her free from ties to all other people.

He let his head fall back, he felt the bite of snowflakes on his lips. Then he turned and kissed her. The touch of her mouth was soft and cold with the snow.

Her hat had slipped to one side, her lips were half open, her eyes round, helpless, her lashes glistening. He held her hand, palm up, and looked at it: she wore a black woolen glove and her fingers were spread out clumsily like a child's; he saw beads of melted snow in the fuzz of the glove; they sparkled radiantly once in the light of a car flashing past.

7.

THE BULLETIN of the Architects' Guild of America carried, in its Miscellaneous Department, a short item announcing Henry Cameron's retirement. Six lines summarized his achievements in architecture and misspelled the names of his two best buildings.

Peter Keating walked into Francon's office and interrupted Francon's well-bred bargaining with an antique dealer over a snuffbox that had belonged to Madame Pompadour. Francon was precipitated into paying nine dollars and twenty-five cents more than he had intended to pay. He turned to Keating testily, after the dealer had left, and asked:

"Well, what is it, Peter, what is it?"

Keating threw the bulletin down on Francon's desk, his thumbnail underscoring the paragraph about Cameron.

"I've got to have that man," said Keating.

"What man?"

"Howard Roark."

"Who the hell," asked Francon, "is Howard Roark?"

"I've told you about him. Cameron's designer."

"Oh...oh, yes, I believe you did. Well, go and get him."

"Do you give me a free hand on how I hire him?"

"What the hell? What is there about hiring another draftsman? Incidentally, did you have to interrupt me for that?"

"He might be difficult. And I want to get him before he decides on anyone else."

"Really? He's going to be difficult about it, is he? Do you intend to beg him to come here after Cameron's? Which is not great recommendation for a young man anyway."

"Come on, Guy. Isn't it?"

"Oh well...well, speaking structurally, not esthetically, Cameron does give them a thorough grounding and...Of course, Cameron was pretty important in his day. As a matter of fact, I was one of his best draftsmen myself once, long ago. There's something to be said for old Cameron when you need that sort of thing. Go ahead. Get your Roark if you think you need him."

"It's not that I really need him. But he's an old friend of mine, and out of a job, and I thought it would be a nice thing to do for him."

"Well, do anything you wish. Only don't bother me about it....Say, Peter, don't you think this is as lovely a snuffbox as you've ever seen?"

That evening, Keating climbed, unannounced, to Roark's room and knocked,

nervously, and entered cheerfully. He found Roark sitting on the window sill, smoking.

"Just passing by," said Keating, "with an evening to kill and happened to think that that's where you live, Howard, and thought I'd drop in to say hello, haven't seen you for such a long time."

"I know what you want," said Roark. "All right. How much?"

"What do you mean, Howard?"

"You know what I mean."

"Sixty-five a week," Keating blurted out. This was not the elaborate approach he had prepared, but he had not expected to find that no approach would be necessary. "Sixty-five to start with. If you think it's not enough, I could maybe..."

"Sixty-five will do."

"You...you'll come with us, Howard?"

"When do you want me to start?"

"Why...as soon as you can! Monday?"

"ALL right."

"Thanks, Howard!"

"On one condition," said Roark. "I'm not going to do any designing. Not any. No details. No Louis XV skyscrapers. Just keep me off esthetics if you want to keep me at all. Put me in the engineering department. Send me on inspections, out in the field. Now, do you still want me?"

"Certainly. Anything you say. You'll like the place, just wait and see. You'll like Francon. He's one of Cameron's men himself."

"He shouldn't boast about it."

"Well..."

"No. Don't worry. I won't say it to his face. I won't say anything to anyone. Is that what you wanted to know?"

"Why, no, I wasn't worried, I wasn't even thinking of that."

"Then it's settled. Good night. See you Monday."

"Well, yes...but I'm in no special hurry, really I came to see you and..."

"What's the matter, Peter? Something bothering you?"

"No...I..."

"You want to know why I'm doing it?" Roark smiled, without resentment or interest. "Is that it? I'll tell you, if you want to know. I don't give a damn where I work next. There's no architect in town that I'd want to work for. But I have to work somewhere, so it might as well be your Francon--if I can get what I

want from you. I'm selling myself, and I'll play the game that way--for the time being."

"Really, Howard, you don't have to look at it like that. There's no limit to how far you can go with us, once you get used to it. You'll see, for a change, what a real office looks like. After Cameron's dump..."

"We'll shut up about that, Peter, and we'll do it damn fast."

"I didn't mean to criticize or...I didn't mean anything." He did not know what to say nor what he should feel. It was a victory, but it seemed hollow. Still, it was a victory and he felt that he wanted to feel affection for Roark.

"Howard, let's go out and have a drink, just sort of to celebrate the occasion."

"Sorry, Peter. That's not part of the job."

Keating had come here prepared to exercise caution and tact to the limit of his ability; he had achieved a purpose he had not expected to achieve; he knew he should take no chances, say nothing else and leave. But something inexplicable, beyond all practical considerations, was pushing him on. He said unheedingly:

"Can't you be human for once in your life?"

"What?"

"Human! Simple. Natural."

"But I am."

"Can't you ever relax?"

Roark smiled, because he was sitting on the window sill, leaning sloppily against the wall, his long legs hanging loosely, the cigarette held without pressure between limp fingers.

"That's not what I mean!" said Keating. "Why can't you go out for a drink with me?"

"What for?"

"Do you always have to have a purpose? Do you always have to be so damn serious? Can't you ever do things without reason, just like everybody else? You're so serious, so old. Everything's important with you, everything's great, significant in some way, every minute, even when you keep still. Can't you ever be comfortable--and unimportant?"

"No."

"Don't you get tired of the heroic?"

"What's heroic about me?"

"Nothing. Everything. I don't know. It's not what you do. It's what you make people feel around you."

"What?"

"The un-normal. The strain. When I'm with you--it's always like a choice.

Between you--and the rest of the world. I don't want that kind of a choice. I don't want to be an outsider. I want to belong. There's so much in the world that's simple and pleasant. It's not all fighting and renunciation. It is--with you."

"What have I ever renounced?"

"Oh, you'll never renounce anything! You'd walk over corpses for what you want. But it's what you've renounced by never wanting it."

"That's because you can't want both."

"Both what?"

"Look, Peter. I've never told you any of those things about me. What makes you see them? I've never asked you to make a choice between me and anything else. What makes you feel that there is a choice involved? What makes you uncomfortable when you feel that--since you're so sure I'm wrong?"

"I...I don't know." He added: "I don't know what you're talking about." And then he asked suddenly:

"Howard, why do you hate me?"

"I don't hate you."

"Well, that's it! Why don't you hate me at least?"

"Why should I?"

"Just to give me something. I know you can't like me. You can't like anybody. So it would be kinder to acknowledge people's existence by hating them."

"I'm not kind, Peter."

And as Keating found nothing to say, Roark added:

"Go home, Peter. You got what you wanted. Let it go at that. See you Monday."
#

Roark stood at a table in the drafting room of Francon & Heyer, a pencil in his hand, a strand of orange hair hanging down over his face, the prescribed pearl-gray smock like a prison uniform on his body.

He had learned to accept his new job. The lines he drew were to be the clean lines of steel beams, and he tried not to think of what these beams would carry. It was difficult, at times. Between him and the plan of the building on which he was working stood the plan of that building as it should have been. He saw what he could make of it, how to change the lines he drew, where to lead them in order to achieve a thing of splendor. He had to choke the knowledge. He had to kill the vision. He had to obey and draw the lines as instructed. It hurt him so much that he shrugged at himself in cold anger. He thought: difficult?--well, learn it.

But the pain remained--and a helpless wonder. The thing he saw was so much more real than the reality of paper, office and commission. He could not understand what made others blind to it, and what made their indifference possible. He looked at the paper before him. He wondered why ineptitude should exist and have its say. He had never known that. And the reality which permitted it could never

become quite real to him.

But he knew that this would not last--he had to wait--it was his only assignment, to wait--what he felt didn't matter--it had to be done--he had to wait.

"Mr. Roark, are you ready with the steel cage for the Gothic lantern for the American Radio Corporation Building?"

He had no friends in the drafting room. He was there like a piece of furniture, as useful, as impersonal and as silent. Only the chief of the engineering department, to which Roark was assigned, had said to Keating after the first two weeks: "You've got more sense than I gave you credit for, Keating. Thanks."

"For what?" asked Keating. "For nothing that was intentional, I'm sure," said the chief.

Once in a while, Keating stopped by Roark's table to say softly: "Will you drop in at my office when you're through tonight, Howard? Nothing important."

When Roark came, Keating began by saying: "Well, how do you like it here, Howard? If there's anything you want, just say so and I'll..." Roark interrupted to ask: "Where is it, this time?" Keating produced sketches from a drawer and said: "I know it's perfectly right, just as it is, but what do you think of it, generally speaking?" Roark looked at the sketches, and even though he wanted to throw them at Keating's face and resign, one thought stopped him: the thought that it was a building and that he had to save it, as others could not pass a drowning man without leaping in to the rescue.

Then he worked for hours, sometimes all night, while Keating sat and watched. He forgot Keating's presence. He saw only a building and his chance to shape it. He knew that the shape would be changed, torn, distorted. Still, some order and reason would remain in its plan. It would be a better building than it would have been if he refused.

Sometimes, looking at the sketch of a structure simpler, cleaner, more honest than the others, Roark would say: "That's not so bad, Peter. You're improving." And Keating would feel an odd little jolt inside, something quiet, private and precious, such as he never felt from the compliments of Guy Francon, of his clients, of all others. Then he would forget it and feel much more substantially pleased when a wealthy lady murmured over a teacup: "You're the coming architect of America, Mr. Keating," though she had never seen his buildings.

He found compensations for his submission to Roark. He would enter the drafting room in the morning, throw a tracing boy's assignment down on Roark's table and say: "Howard, do this up for me, will you?--and make it fast." In the middle of the day, he would send a boy to Roark's table to say loudly: "Mr. Keating wishes to see you in his office at once." He would come out of the office and walk in Roark's direction and say to the room at large: "Where the hell are those Twelfth Street plumbing specifications? Oh, Howard, will you look through the files and dig them up for me?"

At first, he was afraid of Roark's reaction. When he saw no reaction, only a silent obedience, he could restrain himself no longer. He felt a sensual pleasure in giving orders to Roark; and he felt also a fury of resentment at Roark's passive compliance. He continued, knowing that he could continue only so long as Roark exhibited no anger, yet wishing desperately to break him down to an explosion. No explosion came.

Roark liked the days when he was sent out to inspect buildings in construction. He walked through the steel hulks of buildings more naturally than on pavements. The workers observed with curiosity that he walked on narrow planks, on naked beams hanging over empty space, as easily as the best of them.

It was a day in March, and the sky was a faint green with the first hint of spring. In Central Park, five hundred feet below, the earth caught the tone of the sky in a shade of brown that promised to become green, and the lakes lay like splinters of glass under the cobwebs of bare branches. Roark walked through the shell of what was to be a gigantic apartment hotel, and stopped before an electrician at work.

The man was toiling assiduously, bending conduits around a beam. It was a task for hours of strain and patience, in a space overfilled against all calculations. Roark stood, his hands in his pockets, watching the man's slow, painful progress.

The man raised his head and turned to him abruptly. He had a big head and a face so ugly that it became fascinating; it was neither old nor flabby, but it was creased in deep gashes and the powerful jowls drooped like a bulldog's; the eyes were startling--wide, round and china-blue.

"Well?" the man asked angrily, "what's the matter, Brick-top?"

"You're wasting your time," said Roark.

"Yeah?"

"Yeah."

"You don't say!"

"It will take you hours to get your pipes around that beam."

"Know a better way to do it?"

"Sure."

"Run along, punk. We don't like college smarties around here."

"Cut a hole in that beam and put your pipes through."

"What?"

"Cut a hole through the beam."

"The hell I will!"

"The hell you won't."

"It ain't done that way."

"I've done it."

"You?"

"It's done everywhere."

"It ain't gonna be done here. Not by me."

"Then I'll do it for you."

The man roared. "That's rich! When did office boys learn to do a man's work?"

"Give me your torch."

"Look out, boy! It'll burn your pretty pink toes!"

Roark took the man's gloves and goggles, took the acetylene torch, knelt, and sent a thin jet of blue fire at the center of the beam. The man stood watching him. Roark's arm was steady, holding the tense, hissing streak of flame in leash, shuddering faintly with its violence, but holding it aimed straight. There was no strain, no effort in the easy posture of his body, only in his arm. And it seemed as if the blue tension eating slowly through metal came not from the flame but from the hand holding it.

He finished, put the torch down, and rose.

"Jesus!" said the electrician. "Do you know how to handle a torch!"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" He removed the gloves, the goggles, and handed them back. "Do it that way from now on. Tell the foreman I said so."

The electrician was staring reverently at the neat hole cut through the beam. He muttered: "Where did you learn to handle it like that, Red?"

Roark's slow, amused smile acknowledged this concession of victory. "Oh, I've been an electrician, and a plumber, and a rivet catcher, and many other things."

"And went to school besides?"

"Well, in a way."

"Gonna be an architect?"

"Yes."

"Well, you'll be the first one that knows something besides pretty pictures and tea parties. You should see the teacher's pets they send us down from the office."

"If you're apologizing, don't. I don't like them either. Go back to the pipes. So long."

"So long, Red."

The next time Roark appeared on that job, the blue-eyed electrician waved to him from afar, and called him over, and asked advice about his work which he did not need; he stated that his name was Mike and that he had missed Roark for several days. On the next visit the day shift was just leaving, and Mike waited outside for Roark to finish the inspection. "How about a glass of beer, Red?" he invited, when Roark came out. "Sure," said Roark, "thanks."

They sat together at a table in the corner of a basement speakeasy, and they drank beer, and Mike related his favorite tale of how he had fallen five stories when a scaffolding gave way under him, how he had broken three ribs but lived to tell it, and Roark spoke of his days in the building trades. Mike did have a real name, which was Sean Xavier Donnigan, but everyone had forgotten it long

ago; he owned a set of tools and an ancient Ford, and existed for the sole purpose of traveling around the country from one big construction job to another. People meant very little to Mike, but their performance a great deal. He worshipped expertness of any kind. He loved his work passionately and had no tolerance for anything save for other single-track devotions. He was a master in his own field and he felt no sympathy except for mastery. His view of the world was simple: there were the able and there were the incompetent; he was not concerned with the latter. He loved buildings. He despised, however, all architects.

"There was one, Red," he said earnestly, over his fifth beer, "one only and you'd be too young to know about him, but that was the only man that knew building. I worked for him when I was your age."

"Who was that?"

"Henry Cameron was his name. He's dead, I guess, these many years."

Roark looked at him for a long time, then said: "He's not dead, Mike," and added: "I've worked for him."

"You did?"

"For almost three years."

They looked at each other silently, and that was the final seal on their friendship.

Weeks later, Mike stopped Roark, one day, at the building, his ugly face puzzled, and asked:

"Say, Red, I heard the super tell a guy from the contractor's that you're stuck-up and stubborn and the lousiest bastard he's ever been up against. What did you do to him?"

"Nothing."

"What the hell did he mean?"

"I don't know," said Roark. "Do you?"

Mike looked at him, shrugged and grinned.

"No," said Mike.

8.

EARLY IN May, Peter Keating departed for Washington, to supervise the construction of a museum donated to the city by a great philanthropist easing his conscience. The museum building, Keating pointed out proudly, was to be decidedly different: it was not a reproduction of the Parthenon, but of the Maison Carrée at Nîmes.

Keating had been away for some time when an office boy approached Roark's table and informed him that Mr. Francon wished to see him in his office. When Roark entered the sanctuary, Francon smiled from behind the desk and said cheerfully: "Sit down, my friend. Sit down...." but something in Roark's eyes, which he had

never seen at close range before, made Francon's voice shrink and stop, and he added dryly: "Sit down." Roark obeyed. Francon studied him for a second, but could reach no conclusion beyond deciding that the man had a most unpleasant face, yet looked quite correctly attentive.

"You're the one who's worked for Cameron, aren't you?" Francon asked. "Yes," said Roark.

"Mr. Keating has been telling me very nice things about you," Francon tried pleasantly and stopped. It was wasted courtesy; Roark just sat looking at him, waiting. "Listen...what's your name?"

"Roark."

"Listen, Roark. We have a client who is a little...odd, but he's an important man, a very important man, and we have to satisfy him. He's given us a commission for an eight-million-dollar office building, but the trouble is that he has very definite ideas on what he wants it to look like. He wants it--" Francon shrugged apologetically, disclaiming all blame for the preposterous suggestion--"he wants it to look like this." He handed Roark a photograph. It was a photograph of the Dana Building.

Roark sat quite still, the photograph hanging between his fingers. "Do you know that building?" asked Francon.

"Yes."

"Well, that's what he wants. And Mr. Keating's away. I've had Bennett and Cooper and Williams make sketches, but he's turned them down. So I thought I'd give you a chance."

Francon looked at him, impressed by the magnanimity of his own offer. There was no reaction. There was only a man who still looked as if he'd been struck on the head.

"Of course," said Francon, "it's quite a jump for you, quite an assignment, but I thought I'd let you try. Don't be afraid. Mr. Keating and I will go over it afterward. Just draw up the plans and a good sketch of it. You must have an idea of what the man wants. You know Cameron's tricks. But of course, we can't let a crude thing like this come out of our office. We must please him, but we must also preserve our reputation and not frighten all our other clients away. The point is to make it simple and in the general mood of this, but also artistic. You know, the more severe kind of Greek. You don't have to use the Ionic order, use the Doric. Plain pediments and simple moldings, or something like that. Get the idea? Now take this along and show me what you can do. Bennett will give you all the particulars and...What's the mat--"

Francon's voice cut itself off.

"Mr. Francon, please let me design it the way the Dana Building was designed."

"Huh?"

"Let me do it. Not copy the Dana Building, but design it as Henry Cameron would have wanted it done, as I will."

"You mean modernistic?"

"I...well, call it that."

"Are you crazy?"

"Mr. Francon, please listen to me." Roark's words were like the steps of a man walking a tightwire, slow, strained, groping for the only right spot, quivering over an abyss, but precise. "I don't blame you for the things you're doing. I'm Working for you, I'm taking your money, I have no right to express objections. But this time...this time the client is asking for it. You're risking nothing. He wants it. Think of it, there's a man, one man who sees and understands and wants it and has the power to build it. Are you going to fight a client for the first time in your life--and fight for what? To cheat him and to give him the same old trash, when you have so many others asking for it, and one, only one, who comes with a request like this?"

"Aren't you forgetting yourself?" asked Francon, coldly. "What difference would it make to you? Just let me do it my way and show it to him. Only show it to him. He's already turned down three sketches, what if he turns down a fourth? But if he doesn't...if he doesn't..." Roark had never known how to entreat and he was not doing it well; his voice was hard, toneless, revealing the effort, so that the plea became an insult to the man who was making him plead. Keating would have given a great deal to see Roark in that moment. But Francon could not appreciate the triumph he was the first ever to achieve; he recognized only the insult.

"Am I correct in gathering," Francon asked, "that you are criticizing me and teaching me something about architecture?"

"I'm begging you," said Roark, closing his eyes. "If you weren't a protégé of Mr. Keating's, I wouldn't bother to discuss the matter with you any further. But since you are quite obviously naive and inexperienced, I shall point out to you that I am not in the habit of asking for the esthetic opinions of my draftsmen. You will kindly take this photograph--and I do not wish any building as Cameron might have designed it, I wish the scheme of this adapted to our site--and you will follow my instructions as to the Classic treatment of the facade."

"I can't do it," said Roark, very quietly. "What? Are you speaking to me? Are you actually saying: 'Sorry, I can't do it'?"

"I haven't said 'sorry,' Mr. Francon."

"What did you say?"

"That I can't do it."

"Why?"

"You don't want to know why. Don't ask me to do any designing. I'll do any other kind of job you wish. But not that. And not to Cameron's work."

"What do you mean, no designing? You expect to be an architect some day--or do you?"

"Not like this."

"Oh...I see...So you can't do it? You mean you won't?"

"If you prefer."

"Listen, you impertinent fool, this is incredible!" Roark got up. "May I go, Mr.

Francon?"

"In all my life," roared Francon, "in all my experience, I've never seen anything like it! Are you here to tell me what you'll do and what you won't do? Are you here to give me lessons and criticize my taste and pass judgment?"

"I'm not criticizing anything," said Roark quietly. "I'm not passing judgment. There are some things that I can't do. Let it go at that. May I leave now?"

"You may leave this room and this firm now and from now on! You may go straight to the devil! Go and find yourself another employer! Try and find him! Go get your check and get out!"

"Yes, Mr. Francon."

That evening Roark walked to the basement speak-easy where he could always find Mike after the day's work. Mike was now employed on the construction of a factory by the same contractor who was awarded most of Francon's biggest jobs. Mike had expected to see Roark on an inspection visit to the factory that afternoon, and greeted him angrily:

"What's the matter, Red? Lying down on the job?"

When he heard the news, Mike sat still and looked like a bulldog baring its teeth. Then he swore savagely.

"The bastards," he gulped between stronger names, "the bastards..."

"Keep still, Mike."

"Well...what now, Red?"

"Someone else of the same kind, until the same thing happens again."

#

When Keating returned from Washington he went straight up to Francon's office. He had not stopped in the drafting room and had heard no news. Francon greeted him expansively:

"Boy, it's great to see you back! What'll you have? A whisky-and-soda or a little brandy?"

"No, thanks. Just give me a cigarette."

"Here....Boy, you look fine! Better than ever. How do you do it, you lucky bastard? I have so many things to tell you! How did it go down in Washington? Everything all right?" And before Keating could answer, Francon rushed on: "Something dreadful's happened to me. Most disappointing. Do you remember Lili Landau? I thought I was all set with her, but last time I saw her, did I get the cold shoulder! Do you know who's got her? You'll be surprised. Gail Wynand, no less! The girl's flying high. You should see her pictures and her legs all over his newspapers. Will it help her show or won't it! What can I offer against that? And do you know what he's done? Remember how she always said that nobody could give her what she wanted most--her childhood home, the dear little Austrian village where she was born? Well, Wynand bought it, long ago, the whole damn village, and had it shipped here--every bit of it!--and had it assembled again down on the Hudson, and there it stands now, cobbles, church, apple trees, pigsties and all! Then he springs it on Lili, two weeks ago. Wouldn't you just know it? If the King of Babylon could get hanging gardens for his homesick lady,

why not Gail Wynand? Lili's all smiles and gratitude--but the poor girl was really miserable. She'd have much preferred a mink coat. She never wanted the damn village. And Wynand knew it, too. But there it stands, on the Hudson. Last week, he gave a party for her, right there, in that village--a costume party, with Mr. Wynand dressed as Cesare Borgia--wouldn't he, though?--and what a party!--if you can believe what you hear, but you know how it is, you can never prove anything on Wynand. Then what does he do the next day but pose up there himself with little schoolchildren who'd never seen an Austrian village--the philanthropist!--and plasters the photos all over his papers with plenty of sob stuff about educational values, and gets mush notes from women's clubs! I'd like to know what he'll do with the village when he gets rid of Lili! He will, you know, they never last long with him. Do you think I'll have a chance with her then?"

"Sure," said Keating. "Sure, you will. How's everything here in the office?"

"Oh, fine. Same as usual. Lucius had a cold and drank up all of my best Bas Armagnac. It's bad for his heart, and a hundred dollars a case!...Besides, Lucius got himself caught in a nasty little mess. It's that phobia of his, his damn porcelain. Seems he went and bought a teapot from a fence. He knew it was stolen goods, too. Took me quite a bit of bother to save us from a scandal....Oh, by the way, I fired that friend of yours, what's his name?--Roark."

"Oh," said Keating, and let a moment pass, then asked:

"Why?"

"The insolent bastard! Where did you ever pick him up?"

"What happened?"

"I thought I'd be nice to him, give him a real break. I asked him to make a sketch for the Farrell Building--you know, the one Brent finally managed to design and we got Farrell to accept, you know, the simplified Doric--and your friend just up and refused to do it. It seems he has ideals or something. So I showed him the gate....What's the matter? What are you smiling at?"

"Nothing. I can just see it."

"Now don't you ask me to take him back!"

"No, of course not."

For several days, Keating thought that he should call on Roark. He did not know what he would say, but felt dimly that he should say something. He kept postponing it. He was gaining assurance in his work. He felt that he did not need Roark, after all. The days went by, and he did not call on Roark, and he felt relief in being free to forget him.

Beyond the windows of his room Roark saw the roofs, the water tanks, the chimneys, the cars speeding far below. There was a threat in the silence of his room, in the empty days, in his hands hanging idly by his sides. And he felt another threat rising from the city below, as if each window, each strip of pavement, had set itself closed grimly, in wordless resistance. It did not disturb him. He had known and accepted it long ago.

He made a list of the architects whose work he resented least, in the order of their lesser evil, and he set out upon the search for a job, coldly,

systematically, without anger or hope. He never knew whether these days hurt him; he knew only that it was a thing which had to be done.

The architects he saw differed from one another. Some looked at him across the desk, kindly and vaguely, and their manner seemed to say that it was touching, his ambition to be an architect, touching and laudable and strange and attractively sad as all the delusions of youth. Some smiled at him with thin, drawn lips and seemed to enjoy his presence in the room, because it made them conscious of their own accomplishment. Some spoke coldly, as if his ambition were a personal insult. Some were brusque, and the sharpness of their voices seemed to say that they needed good draftsmen, they always needed good draftsmen, but this qualification could not possibly apply to him, and would he please refrain from being rude enough to force them to express it more plainly.

It was not malice. It was not a judgment passed upon his merit. They did not think he was worthless. They simply did not care to find out whether he was good. Sometimes, he was asked to show his sketches; he extended them across a desk, feeling a contraction of shame in the muscles of his hand; it was like having the clothes torn off his body, and the shame was not, that his body was exposed, but that it was exposed to indifferent eyes. Once in a while he made a trip to New Jersey, to see Cameron. They sat together on the porch of a house on a hill, Cameron in a wheel chair, his hands on an old blanket spread over his knees. "How is it, Howard? Pretty hard?"

"No."

"Want me to give you a letter to one of the bastards?"

"No."

Then Cameron would not speak of it any more, he did not want to speak of it, he did not want the thought of Roark rejected by their city to become real. When Roark came to him, Cameron spoke of architecture with the simple confidence of a private possession. They sat together, looking at the city in the distance, on the edge of the sky, beyond the river. The sky was growing dark and luminous as blue-green glass; the buildings looked like clouds condensed on the glass, gray-blue clouds frozen for an instant in straight angles and vertical shafts, with the sunset caught in the spires....

As the summer months passed, as his list was exhausted and he returned again to the places that had refused him once, Roark found that a few things were known about him and he heard the same words--spoken bluntly or timidly or angrily or apologetically--"You were kicked out of Stanton. You were kicked out of Francon's office." All the different voices saying it had one note in common: a note of relief in the certainty that the decision had been made for them.

He sat on the window sill, in the evening, smoking, his hand spread on the pane, the city under his fingers, the glass cold against his skin.

In September, he read an article entitled "Make Way For Tomorrow" by Gordon L. Prescott, A.G.A. in the Architectural Tribune. The article stated that the tragedy of the profession was the hardships placed in the way of its talented beginners; that great gifts had been lost in the struggle, unnoticed; that architecture was perishing from a lack of new blood and new thought, a lack of originality, vision and courage; that the author of the article made it his aim to search for promising beginners, to encourage them, develop them and give them the chance they deserved. Roark had never heard of Gordon L. Prescott, but there was a tone of honest conviction in the article. He allowed himself to start for Prescott's office with the first hint of hope.

The reception room of Gordon L. Prescott's office was done in gray, black and scarlet; it was correct, restrained and daring all at once. A young and very pretty secretary informed Roark that one could not see Mr. Prescott without an appointment, but that she would be very glad to make an appointment for next Wednesday at two-fifteen. On Wednesday at two-fifteen, the secretary smiled at Roark and asked him please to be seated for just a moment. At four forty-five he was admitted into Gordon L. Prescott's office. Gordon L. Prescott wore a brown checkered tweed jacket and a white turtle-neck sweater of angora wool. He was tall, athletic and thirty-five, but his face combined a crisp air of sophisticated wisdom with the soft skin, the button nose, the small, puffed mouth of a college hero. His face was sun-scorched, his blond hair clipped short, in a military Prussian haircut. He was frankly masculine, frankly unconcerned about elegance and frankly conscious of the effect.

He listened to Roark silently, and his eyes were like a stop watch registering each separate second consumed by each separate word of Roark's. He let the first sentence go by; on the second he interrupted to say curtly: "Let me see your drawings," as if to make it clear that anything Roark might say was quite well known to him already.

He held the drawings in his bronzed hands. Before he looked down at them, he said: "Ah, yes, so many young men come to me for advice, so many." He glanced at the first sketch, but raised his head before he had seen it. "Of course, it's the combination of the practical and the transcendental that is so hard for beginners to grasp." He slipped the sketch to the bottom of the pile. "Architecture is primarily a utilitarian conception, and the problem is to elevate the principle of pragmatism into the realm of esthetic abstraction. All else is nonsense." He glanced at two sketches and slipped them to the bottom. "I have no patience with visionaries who see a holy crusade in architecture for architecture's sake. The great dynamic principle is the common principle of the human equation." He glanced at a sketch and slipped it under. "The public taste and the public heart are the final criteria of the artist. The genius is the one who knows how to express the general. The exception is to tap the unexceptional." He weighed the pile of sketches in his hand, noted that he had gone through half of them and dropped them down on the desk.

"Ah, yes," he said, "your work. Very interesting. But not practical. Not mature. Unfocused and undisciplined. Adolescent. Originality for originality's sake. Not at all in the spirit of the present day. If you want an idea of the sort of thing for which there is a crying need--here--let me show you." He took a sketch out of a drawer of the desk. "Here's a young man who came to me totally unrecommended, a beginner who had never worked before. When you can produce stuff like this, you won't find it necessary to look for a job. I saw this one sketch of his and I took him on at once, started him at twenty-five a week, too. There's no question but that he is a potential genius." He extended the sketch to Roark. The sketch represented a house in the shape of a grain silo incredibly merged with the simplified, emaciated shadow of the Parthenon.

"That," said Gordon L. Prescott, "is originality, the new in the eternal. Try toward something like this. I can't really say that I predict a great deal for your future. We must be frank, I wouldn't want to give you illusions based on my authority. You have a great deal to learn. I couldn't venture a guess on what talent you might possess or develop later. But with hard work, perhaps...Architecture is a difficult profession, however, and the competition is stiff, you know, very stiff...And now, if you'll excuse me, my secretary has an appointment waiting for me..."

#

Roark walked home late on an evening in October. It had been another of the many days that stretched into months behind him, and he could not tell what had taken place in the hours of that day, whom he had seen, what form the words of refusal had taken. He concentrated fiercely on the few minutes at hand, when he was in an office, forgetting everything else; he forgot these minutes when he left the office; it had to be done, it had been done, it concerned him no longer. He was free once more on his way home.

A long street stretched before him, its high banks, coming close together ahead, so narrow that he felt as if he could spread his arms, seize the spires and push them apart. He walked swiftly, the pavements as a springboard throwing his steps forward.

He saw a lighted triangle of concrete suspended somewhere hundreds of feet above the ground. He could not see what stood below, supporting it; he was free to think of what he'd want to see there, what he would have made to be seen. Then he thought suddenly that now, in this moment, according to the city, according to everyone save that hard certainty within him, he would never build again, never--before he had begun. He shrugged. Those things happening to him, in those offices of strangers, were only a kind of sub-reality, unsubstantial incidents in the path of a substance they could not reach or touch.

He turned into side streets leading to the East River. A lonely traffic light hung far ahead, a spot of red in a bleak darkness. The old houses crouched low to the ground, hunched under the weight of the sky. The street was empty and hollow, echoing to his footsteps. He went on, his collar raised, his hands in his pockets. His shadow rose from under his heels, when he passed a light, and brushed a wall in a long black arc, like the sweep of a windshield wiper.

9.

JOHN ERIK SNYTE looked through Roark's sketches, flipped three of them aside, gathered the rest into an even pile, glanced again at the three, tossed them down one after another on top of the pile, with three sharp thuds, and said:

"Remarkable. Radical, but remarkable. What are you doing tonight?"

"Why?" asked Roark, stupefied.

"Are you free? Mind starting in at once? Take your coat off, go to the drafting room, borrow tools from somebody and do me up a sketch for a department store we're remodeling. Just a quick sketch, just a general idea, but I must have it tomorrow. Mind staying late tonight? The heat's on and I'll have Joe send you up some dinner. Want black coffee or Scotch or what? Just tell Joe. Can you stay?"

"Yes," said Roark, incredulously. "I can work all night."

"Fine! Splendid! that's just what I've always needed--a Cameron man. I've got every other kind. Oh, yes, what did they pay you at Francon's?"

"Sixty-five."

"Well, I can't splurge like Guy the Epicure. Fifty's tops. Okay? Fine. Go right in. I'll have Billings explain about the store to you. I want something modern. Understand? Modern, violent, crazy, to knock their eye out. Don't restrain yourself. Go the limit. Pull any stunt you can think of, the goofier the better.

Come on!"

John Erik Snyte shot to his feet, flung a door open into a huge drafting room, flew in, skidded against a table, stopped, and said to a stout man with a grim moon-face: "Billings--Roark. He's our modernist. Give him the Benton store. Get him some instruments. Leave him your keys and show him what to lock up tonight. Start him as of this morning. Fifty. What time was my appointment with Dolson Brothers? I'm late already. So long, I won't be back tonight."

He skidded out, slamming the door. Billings evinced no surprise. He looked at Roark as if Roark had always been there. He spoke impassively, in a weary drawl. Within twenty minutes he left Roark at a drafting table with paper, pencils, instruments, a set of plans and photographs of the department store, a set of charts and a long list of instructions.

Roark looked at the clean white sheet before him, his fist closed tightly about the thin stem of a pencil. He put the pencil down, and picked it up again, his thumb running softly up and down the smooth shaft; he saw that the pencil was trembling. He put it down quickly, and he felt anger at himself for the weakness of allowing this job to mean so much to him, for the sudden knowledge of what the months of idleness behind him had really meant. His fingertips were pressed to the paper, as if the paper held them, as a surface charged with electricity will hold the flesh of a man who has brushed against it, hold and hurt. He tore his fingers off the paper. Then he went to work....

John Erik Snyte was fifty years old; he wore an expression of quizzical amusement, shrewd and unwholesome, as if he shared with each man he contemplated a lewd secret which he would not mention because it was so obvious to them both. He was a prominent architect; his expression did not change when he spoke of this fact. He considered Guy Francon an impractical idealist; he was not restrained by a Classic dogma; he was much more skillful and liberal: he built anything. He had no distaste for modern architecture and built cheerfully, when a rare client asked for it, bare boxes with flat roofs, which he called progressive; he built Roman mansions which he called fastidious; he built Gothic churches which he called spiritual. He saw no difference among any of them. He never became angry, except when somebody called him eclectic.

He had a system of his own. He employed five designers of various types and he staged a contest among them on each commission he received. He chose the winning design and improved it with bits of the four others. "Six minds," he said, "are better than one."

When Roark saw the final drawing of the Benton Department Store, he understood why Snyte had not been afraid to hire him. He recognized his own planes of space, his windows, his system of circulation; he saw, added to it, Corinthian capitals, Gothic vaulting, Colonial chandeliers and incredible moldings, vaguely Moorish. The drawing was done in water-color, with miraculous delicacy, mounted on cardboard, covered with a veil of tissue paper. The men in the drafting room were not allowed to look at it, except from a safe distance; all hands had to be washed, all cigarettes discarded. John Erik Snyte attached a great importance to the proper appearance of a drawing for submission to clients, and kept a young Chinese student of architecture employed solely upon the execution of these masterpieces.

Roark knew what to expect of his job. He would never see his work erected, only pieces of it, which he preferred not to see; but he would be free to design as he wished and he would have the experience of solving actual problems. It was less than he wanted and more than he could expect. He accepted it at that. He met his fellow designers, the four other contestants, and learned that they were

unofficially nicknamed in the drafting room as "Classic,"

"Gothic,"

"Renaissance" and "Miscellaneous." He winced a little when he was addressed as "Hey, Modernistic."

#

The strike of the building-trades unions infuriated Guy Francon. The strike had started against the contractors who were erecting the Noyes-Belmont Hotel, and had spread to all the new structures of the city. It had been mentioned in the press that the architects of the Noyes-Belmont were the firm of Francon & Heyer.

Most of the press helped the fight along, urging the contractors not to surrender. The loudest attacks against the strikers came from the powerful papers of the great Wynand chain.

"We have always stood," said the Wynand editorials, "for the rights of the common man against the yellow sharks of privilege, but we cannot give our support to the destruction of law and order." It had never been discovered whether the Wynand papers led the public or the public led the Wynand papers; it was known only that the two kept remarkably in step. It was not known to anyone, however, save to Guy Francon and a very few others, that Gail Wynand owned the corporation which owned the corporation which owned the Noyes-Belmont Hotel.

This added greatly to Francon's discomfort. Gail Wynand's real-estate operations were rumored to be vaster than his journalistic empire. It was the first chance Francon had ever had at a Wynand commission and he grasped it avidly, thinking of the possibilities which it could open. He and Keating had put their best efforts into designing the most ornate of all Rococo palaces for future patrons who could pay twenty-five dollars per day per room and who were fond of plaster flowers, marble cupids and open elevator cages of bronze lace. The strike had shattered the future possibilities; Francon could not be blamed for it, but one could never tell whom Gail Wynand would blame and for what reason. The unpredictable, unaccountable shifts of Wynand's favor were famous, and it was well known that few architects he employed once were ever employed by him again.

Francon's sullen mood led him to the unprecedented breach of snapping over nothing in particular at the one person who had always been immune from it--Peter Keating. Keating shrugged, and turned his back to him in silent insolence. Then Keating wandered aimlessly through the halls, snarling at young draftsmen without provocation. He bumped into Lucius N. Heyer in a doorway and snapped: "Look where you're going!" Heyer stared after him, bewildered, blinking.

There was little to do in the office, nothing to say and everyone to avoid. Keating left early and walked home through a cold December twilight.

At home, he cursed aloud the thick smell of paint from the overheated radiators. He cursed the chill, when his mother opened a window. He could find no reason for his restlessness, unless it was the sudden inactivity that left him alone. He could not bear to be left alone.

He snatched up the telephone receiver and called Catherine Halsey. The sound of her clear voice was like a hand pressed soothingly against his hot forehead. He said: "Oh, nothing important, dear, I just wondered if you'd be home tonight. I thought I'd drop in after dinner."

"Of course, Peter. I'll be home."

"Swell. About eight-thirty?"

"Yes...Oh, Peter, have you heard about Uncle Ellsworth?"

"Yes, God damn it, I've heard about your Uncle Ellsworth!...I'm sorry, Katie...Forgive me, darling, I didn't mean to be rude, but I've been hearing about your uncle all day long. I know, it's wonderful and all that, only look, we're not going to talk about him again tonight!"

"No, of course not. I'm sorry. I understand. I'll be waiting for you."

"So long, Katie."

He had heard the latest story about Ellsworth Toohey, but he did not want to think of it because it brought him back to the annoying subject of the strike. Six months ago, on the wave of his success with *Sermons in Stone*, Ellsworth Toohey had been signed to write "One Small Voice," a daily syndicated column for the Wynand papers. It appeared in the *Banner* and had started as a department of art criticism, but grown into an informal tribune from which Ellsworth M. Toohey pronounced verdicts on art, literature, New York restaurants, international crises and sociology--mainly sociology. It had been a great success. But the building strike had placed Ellsworth M. Toohey in a difficult position. He made no secret of his sympathy with the strikers, but he had said nothing in his column, for no one could say what he pleased on the papers owned by Gail Wynand save Gail Wynand. However, a mass meeting of strike sympathizers had been called for this evening. Many famous men were to speak, Ellsworth Toohey among them. At least, Toohey's name had been announced.

The event caused a great deal of curious speculation and bets were made on whether Toohey would dare to appear. "He will," Keating had heard a draftsman insist vehemently, "he'll sacrifice himself. He's that kind. He's the only honest man in print."

"He won't," another had said. "Do you realize what it means to pull a stunt like that on Wynand? Once Wynand gets it in for a man, he'll break the guy for sure as hell's fire. Nobody knows when he'll do it or how he'll do it, but he'll do it, and nobody'll prove a thing on him, and you're done for once you get Wynand after you." Keating did not care about the issue one way or another, and the whole matter annoyed him.

He ate his dinner, that evening, in grim silence and when Mrs. Keating began, with an "Oh, by the way..." to lead the conversation in a direction he recognized, he snapped: "You're not going to talk about Catherine. Keep still." Mrs. Keating said nothing further and concentrated on forcing more food on his plate.

He took a taxi to Greenwich Village. He hurried up the stairs. He jerked at the bell. He waited. There was no answer. He stood, leaning against the wall, ringing, for a long time. Catherine wouldn't be out when she knew he was coming; she couldn't be. He walked incredulously down the stairs, out to the street, and looked up at the windows of her apartment. The windows were dark.

He stood, looking up at the windows as at a tremendous betrayal. Then came a sick feeling of loneliness, as if he were homeless in a great city; for the moment, he forgot his own address or its existence. Then he thought of the meeting, the great mass meeting where her uncle was publicly to make a martyr of himself tonight. That's where she went, he thought, the damn little fool! He said aloud: "To hell with her!"...And he was walking rapidly in the direction of

the meeting hall.

There was one naked bulb of light over the square frame of the hall's entrance, a small, blue-white lump glowing ominously, too cold and too bright. It leaped out of the dark street, lighting one thin trickle of rain from some ledge above, a glistening needle of glass, so thin and smooth that Keating thought crazily of stories where men had been killed by being pierced with an icicle. A few curious loafers stood indifferently in the rain around the entrance, and a few policemen. The door was open. The dim lobby was crowded with people who could not get into the packed hall, they were listening to a loud-speaker installed there for the occasion. At the door three vague shadows were handing out pamphlets to passers-by. One of the shadows was a consumptive, unshaved young man with a long, bare neck; the other was a trim youth with a fur collar on an expensive coat; the third was Catherine Halsey.

She stood in the rain, slumped, her stomach jutting forward in weariness, her nose shiny, her eyes bright with excitement. Keating stopped, staring at her.

Her hand shot toward him mechanically with a pamphlet, then she raised her eyes and saw him. She smiled without astonishment and said happily:

"Why, Peter! How sweet of you to come here!"

"Katie..." He choked a little. "Katie, what the hell..."

"But I had to, Peter." Her voice had no trace of apology. "You don't understand, but I..."

"Get out of the rain. Get inside."

"But I can't! I have to..."

"Get out of the rain at least, you fool!" He pushed her roughly through the door, into a corner of the lobby.

"Peter darling, you're not angry, are you? You see, it was like this: I didn't think Uncle would let me come here tonight, but at the last minute he said I could if I wanted to, and that I could help with the pamphlets. I knew you'd understand, and I left you a note on the living room table, explaining, and..."

"You left me a note? Inside?"

"Yes...Oh...Oh, dear me, I never thought of that, you couldn't get in of course, how silly of me, but I was in such a rush! No, you're not going to be angry, you can't! Don't you see what this means to him? Don't you know what he's sacrificing by coming here? And I knew he would. I told them so, those people who said not a chance, it'll be the end of him--and it might be, but he doesn't care. That's what he's like. I'm frightened and I'm terribly happy, because what he's done--it makes me believe in all human beings. But I'm frightened, because you see, Wynand will..."

"Keep still! I know it all. I'm sick of it. I don't want to hear about your uncle or Wynand or the damn strike. Let's get out of here."

"Oh, no, Peter! We can't! I want to hear him and..."

"Shut up over there!" someone hissed at them from the crowd.

"We're missing it all," she whispered. "That's Austen Heller speaking. Don't you

want to hear Austen Heller?"

Keating looked up at the loud-speaker with a certain respect, which he felt for all famous names. He had not read much of Austen Heller, but he knew that Heller was the star columnist of the Chronicle, a brilliant, independent newspaper, arch-enemy of the Wynand publications; that Heller came from an old, distinguished family and had graduated from Oxford; that he had started as a literary critic and ended by becoming a quiet fiend devoted to the destruction of all forms of compulsion, private or public, in heaven or on earth; that he had been cursed by preachers, bankers, club-women and labor organizers; that he had better manners than the social elite whom he usually mocked, and a tougher constitution than the laborers whom he usually defended; that he could discuss the latest play on Broadway, medieval poetry or international finance; that he never donated to charity, but spent more of his own money than he could afford, on defending political prisoners anywhere.

The voice coming from the loud-speaker was dry, precise, with the faint trace of a British accent.

"...and we must consider," Austen Heller was saying unemotionally, "that since--unfortunately--we are forced to live together, the most important thing for us to remember is that the only way in which we can have any law at all is to have as little of it as possible. I see no ethical standard to which to measure the whole unethical conception of a State, except in the amount of time, of thought, of money, of effort and of obedience, which a society extorts from its every member. Its value and its civilization are in inverse ratio to that extortion. There is no conceivable law by which a man can be forced to work on any terms except those he chooses to set. There is no conceivable law to prevent him from setting them--just as there is none to force his employer to accept them. The freedom to agree or disagree is the foundation of our kind of society--and the freedom to strike is a part of it. I am mentioning this as a reminder to a certain Petronius from Hell's Kitchen, an exquisite bastard who has been rather noisy lately about telling us that this strike represents a destruction of law and order."

The loud-speaker coughed out a high, shrill sound of approval and a clatter of applause. There were gasps among the people in the lobby. Catherine grasped Keating's arm. "Oh, Peter!" she whispered. "He means Wynand! Wynand was born in Hell's Kitchen. He can afford to say that, but Wynand will take it out on Uncle Ellsworth!"

Keating could not listen to the rest of Heller's speech, because his head was swimming in so violent an ache that the sounds hurt his eyes and he had to keep his eyelids shut tightly. He leaned against the wall.

He opened his eyes with a jerk, when he became aware of the peculiar silence around him. He had not noticed the end of Heller's speech. He saw the people in the lobby standing in tense, solemn expectation, and the blank rasping of the loud-speaker pulled every glance into its dark funnel. Then a voice came through the silence, loudly and slowly:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have the great honor of presenting to you now Mr. Ellsworth Monkton Toohey!"

Well, thought Keating, Bennett's won his six bits down at the office. There were a few seconds of silence. Then the thing which happened hit Keating on the back of the head; it was not a sound nor a blow, it was something that ripped time apart, that cut the moment from the normal one preceding it. He knew only the shock, at first; a distinct, conscious second was gone before he realized what

it was and that it was applause. It was such a crash of applause that he waited for the loud-speaker to explode; it went on and on and on, pressing against the walls of the lobby, and he thought he could feel the walls buckling out to the street.

The people around him were cheering. Catherine stood, her lips parted, and he felt certain that she was not breathing at all.

It was a long time before silence came suddenly, as abrupt and shocking as the roar; the loud-speaker died, choking on a high note. Those in the lobby stood still. Then came the voice.

"My friends," it said, simply and solemnly. "My brothers," it added softly, involuntarily, both full of emotion and smiling apologetically at the emotion. "I am more touched by this reception than I should allow myself to be. I hope I shall be forgiven for a trace of the vain child which is in all of us. But I realize--and in that spirit I accept it--that this tribute was paid not to my person, but to a principle which chance has granted me to represent in all humility tonight."

It was not a voice, it was a miracle. It unrolled as a velvet banner. It spoke English words, but the resonant clarity of each syllable made it sound like a new language spoken for the first time. It was the voice of a giant.

Keating stood, his mouth open. He did not hear what the voice was saying. He heard the beauty of the sounds without meaning. He felt no need to know the meaning; he could accept anything, he would be led blindly anywhere.

"...and so, my friends," the voice was saying, "the lesson to be learned from our tragic struggle is the lesson of unity. We shall unite or we shall be defeated. Our will--the will of the disinherited, the forgotten, the oppressed--shall weld us into a solid bulwark, with a common faith and a common goal. This is the time for every man to renounce the thoughts of his petty little problems, of gain, of comfort, of self-gratification. This is the time to merge his self in a great current, in the rising tide which is approaching to sweep us all, willing or unwilling, into the future. History, my friends, does not ask questions or acquiescence. It is irrevocable, as the voice of the masses that determine it. Let us listen to the call. Let us organize, my brothers. Let us organize. Let us organize. Let us organize. Let us organize."

Keating looked at Catherine. There was no Catherine; there was only a white face dissolving in the sounds of the loudspeaker. It was not that she heard her uncle; Keating could feel no jealousy of him; he wished he could. It was not affection. It was something cold and impersonal that left her empty, her will surrendered and no human will holding hers, but a nameless thing in which she was being swallowed.

"Let's get out of here," he whispered. His voice was savage. He was afraid.

She turned to him, as if she were emerging from unconsciousness. He knew that she was trying to recognize him and everything he implied. She whispered: "Yes. Let's get out." They walked through the streets, through the rain, without direction. It was cold, but they went on, to move, to feel the movement, to know the sensation of their own muscles moving.

"We're getting drenched," Keating said at last, as bluntly and naturally as he could; their silence frightened him; it proved that they both knew the same thing and that the thing had been real. "Let's find some place where we can have a drink."

"Yes," said Catherine, "let's. It's so cold....Isn't it stupid of me? Now I've missed Uncle's speech and I wanted so much to hear it." It was all right. She had mentioned it. She had mentioned it quite naturally, with a healthy amount of proper regret. The thing was gone. "But I wanted to be with you, Peter...I want to be with you always." The thing gave a last jerk, not in the meaning of what she said, but in the reason that had prompted her to say it. Then it was gone, and Keating smiled; his fingers sought her bare wrist between her sleeve and glove, and her skin was warm against his....

Many days later Keating heard the story that was being told all over town. It was said that on the day after the mass meeting Gail Wynand had given Ellsworth Toohey a raise in salary. Toohey had been furious and had tried to refuse it. "You cannot bribe me, Mr. Wynand," he said. "I'm not bribing you," Wynand had answered; "don't flatter yourself."

#

When the strike was settled, interrupted construction went forward with a spurt throughout the city, and Keating found himself spending days and nights at work, with new commissions pouring into the office. Francon smiled happily at everybody and gave a small party for his staff, to erase the memory of anything he might have said. The palatial residence of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Ainsworth on Riverside Drive, a pet project of Keating's, done in Late Renaissance and gray granite, was complete at last. Mr. and Mrs. Dale Ainsworth gave a formal reception as a housewarming, to which Guy Francon and Peter Keating were invited, but Lucius N. Heyer was ignored, quite accidentally, as always happened to him of late. Francon enjoyed the reception, because every square foot of granite in the house reminded him of the stupendous payment received by a certain granite quarry in Connecticut. Keating enjoyed the reception, because the stately Mrs. Ainsworth said to him with a disarming smile: "But I was certain that you were Mr. Francon's partner! It's Francon and Heyer, of course! How perfectly careless of me! All I can offer by way of excuse is that if you aren't his partner, one would certainly say you were entitled to be!" Life in the office rolled on smoothly, in one of those periods when everything seemed to go well.

Keating was astonished, therefore, one morning shortly after the Ainsworth reception, to see Francon arrive at the office with a countenance of nervous irritation. "Oh, nothing," he waved his hand at Keating impatiently, "nothing at all." In the drafting room Keating noticed three draftsmen, their heads close together, bent over a section of the New York Banner, reading with a guilty kind of avid interest; he heard an unpleasant chuckle from one of them. When they saw him the paper disappeared, too quickly. He had no time to inquire into this; a contractor's job runner was waiting for him in his office, also a stack of mail and drawings to be approved.

He had forgotten the incident three hours later in a rush of appointments. He felt light, clear-headed, exhilarated by his own energy. When he had to consult his library on a new drawing which he wished to compare with its best prototypes, he walked out of his office, whistling, swinging the drawing gaily.

His motion had propelled him halfway across the reception room, when he stopped short; the drawing swung forward and flapped back against his knees. He forgot that it was quite improper for him to pause there like that in the circumstances.

A young woman stood before the railing, speaking to the reception clerk. Her slender body seemed out of all scale in relation to a normal human body; its lines were so long, so fragile, so exaggerated that she looked like a stylized

drawing of a woman and made the correct proportions of a normal being appear heavy and awkward beside her. She wore a plain gray suit; the contrast between its tailored severity and her appearance was deliberately exorbitant--and strangely elegant. She let the fingertips of one hand rest on the railing, a narrow hand ending the straight imperious line of her arm. She had gray eyes that were not ovals, but two long, rectangular cuts edged by parallel lines of lashes; she had an air of cold serenity and an exquisitely vicious mouth. Her face, her pale gold hair, her suit seemed to have no color, but only a hint, just on the verge of the reality of color, making the full reality seem vulgar. Keating stood still, because he understood for the first time what it was that artists spoke about when they spoke of beauty.

"I'll see him now, if I see him at all," she was saying to the reception clerk. "He asked me to come and this is the only time I have." It was not a command; she spoke as if it were not necessary for her voice to assume the tones of commanding.

"Yes, but..." A light buzzed on the clerk's switchboard; she plugged the connection through, hastily. "Yes, Mr. Francon..." She listened and nodded with relief. "Yes, Mr. Francon." She turned to the visitor: "Will you go right in, please?"

The young woman turned and looked at Keating as she passed him on her way to the stairs. Her eyes went past him without stopping. Something ebbed from his stunned admiration. He had had time to see her eyes; they seemed weary and a little contemptuous, but they left him with a sense of cold cruelty.

He heard her walking up the stairs, and the feeling vanished, but the admiration remained. He approached the reception clerk eagerly.

"Who was that?" he asked.

The clerk shrugged:

"That's the boss's little girl."

"Why, the lucky stiff!" said Keating. "He's been holding out on me."

"You misunderstood me," the clerk said coldly. "It's his daughter. It's Dominique Francon."

"Oh," said Keating. "Oh, Lord!"

"Yeah?" the girl looked at him sarcastically. "Have you read this morning's Banner?"

"No. Why?"

"Read it."

Her switchboard buzzed and she turned away from him.

He sent a boy for a copy of the Banner, and turned anxiously to the column, "Your House," by Dominique Francon. He had heard that she'd been quite successful lately with descriptions of the homes of prominent New Yorkers. Her field was confined to home decoration, but she ventured occasionally into architectural criticism. Today her subject was the new residence of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Ainsworth on Riverside Drive. He read, among many other things, the following:

"You enter a magnificent lobby of golden marble and you think that this is the City Hall or the Main Post Office, but it isn't. It has, however, everything: the mezzanine with the colonnade and the stairway with a goitre and the cartouches in the form of looped leather belts. Only it's not leather, it's marble. The dining room has a splendid bronze gate, placed by mistake on the ceiling, in the shape of a trellis entwined with fresh bronze grapes. There are dead ducks and rabbits hanging on the wall panels, in bouquets of carrots, petunias and string beans. I do not think these would have been very attractive if real, but since they are bad plaster imitations, it is all right....The bedroom windows face a brick wall, not a very neat wall, but nobody needs to see the bedrooms....The front windows are large enough and admit plenty of light, as well as the feet of the marble cupids that roost on the outside. The cupids are well fed and present a pretty picture to the street, against the severe granite of the façade; they are quite commendable, unless you just can't stand to look at dimpled soles every time you glance out to see whether it's raining. If you get tired of it, you can always look out of the central windows of the third floor, and into the cast-iron rump of Mercury who sits on top of the pediment over the entrance. It's a very beautiful entrance. Tomorrow, we shall visit the home of Mr. and Mrs. Smythe-Pickering."

Keating had designed the house. But he could not help chuckling through his fury when he thought of what Francon must have felt reading this, and of how Francon was going to face Mrs. Dale Ainsworth. Then he forgot the house and the article. He remembered only the girl who had written it.

He picked three sketches at random from his table and started for Francon's office to ask his approval of the sketches, which he did not need.

On the stair landing outside Francon's closed door he stopped. He heard Francon's voice behind the door, loud, angry and helpless, the voice he always heard when Francon was beaten.

"...to expect such an outrage! From my own daughter! I'm used to anything from you, but this beats it all. What am I going to do? How am I going to explain? Do you have any kind of a vague idea of my position?"

Then Keating heard her laughing; it was a sound so gay and so cold that he knew it was best not to go in. He knew he did not want to go in, because he was afraid again, as he had been when he'd seen her eyes.

He turned and descended the stairs. When he had reached the floor below, he was thinking that he would meet her, that he would meet her soon and that Francon would not be able to prevent it now. He thought of it eagerly, laughing in relief at the picture of Francon's daughter as he had imagined her for years, revising his vision of his future; even though he felt dimly that it would be better if he never met her again.

10.

RALSTON HOLCOMBE had no visible neck, but his chin took care of that. His chin and jaws formed an unbroken arc, resting on his chest. His cheeks were pink, soft to the touch, with the irresilient softness of age, like the skin of a peach that has been scalded. His rich white hair rose over his forehead and fell to his shoulders in the sweep of a medieval mane. It left dandruff on the back of his collar.

He walked through the streets of New York, wearing a broad-brimmed hat, a dark business suit, a pale green satin shirt, a vest of white brocade, a huge black bow emerging from under his chin, and he carried a staff, not a cane, but a tall ebony staff surmounted by a bulb of solid gold. It was as if his huge body were resigned to the conventions of a prosaic civilization and to its drab garments, but the oval of his chest and stomach sallied forth, flying the colors of his inner soul.

These things were permitted to him, because he was a genius. He was also president of the Architects' Guild of America. Ralston Holcombe did not subscribe to the views of his colleagues in the organization. He was not a grubbing builder nor a businessman. He was, he stated firmly, a man of ideals.

He denounced the deplorable state of American architecture and the unprincipled eclecticism of its practitioners. In any period of history, he declared, architects built in the spirit of their own time, and did not pick designs from the past; we could be true to history only in heeding her law, which demanded that we plant the roots of our art firmly in the reality of our own life. He decried the stupidity of erecting buildings that were Greek, Gothic or Romanesque; let us, he begged, be modern and build in the style that belongs to our days. He had found that style. It was Renaissance.

He stated his reasons clearly. Inasmuch, he pointed out, as nothing of great historical importance had happened in the world since the Renaissance, we should consider ourselves still living in that period; and all the outward forms of our existence should remain faithful to the examples of the great masters of the sixteenth century.

He had no patience with the few who spoke of a modern architecture in terms quite different from his own; he ignored them; he stated only that men who wanted to break with all of the past were lazy ignoramuses, and that one could not put originality above Beauty. His voice trembled reverently on that last word. He accepted nothing but stupendous commissions. He specialized in the eternal and the monumental. He built a great many memorials and capitols. He designed for International Expositions.

He built like a composer improvising under the spur of a mystic guidance. He had sudden inspirations. He would add an enormous dome to the flat roof of a finished structure, or encrust a long vault with gold-leaf mosaic, or rip off a facade of limestone to replace it with marble. His clients turned pale, stuttered--and paid. His imperial personality carried him to victory in any encounter with a client's thrift; behind him stood the stern, unspoken, overwhelming assertion that he was an Artist. His prestige was enormous.

He came from a family listed in the Social Register. In his middle years he had married a young lady whose family had not made the Social Register, but made piles of money instead, in a chewing-gum empire left to an only daughter.

Ralston Holcombe was now sixty-five, to which he added a few years, for the sake of his friends' compliments on his wonderful physique; Mrs. Ralston Holcombe was forty-two, from which she deducted considerably.

Mrs. Ralston Holcombe maintained a salon that met informally every Sunday afternoon. "Everybody who is anybody in architecture drops in on us," she told her friends. "They'd better," she added.

On a Sunday afternoon in March, Keating drove to the Holcombe mansion--a reproduction of a Florentine palazzo--dutifully, but a little reluctantly. He had been a frequent guest at these celebrated gatherings and he was beginning to

be bored, for he knew everybody he could expect to find there. He felt, however, that he had to attend this time, because the occasion was to be in honor of the completion of one more capitol by Ralston Holcombe in some state or another.

A substantial crowd was lost in the marble ballroom of the Holcombes, scattered in forlorn islets through an expanse intended for court receptions. The guests stood about, self-consciously informal, working at being brilliant. Steps rang against the marble with the echoing sound of a crypt. The flames of tall candles clashed desolately with the gray of the light from the street; the light made the candles seem dimmer, the candles gave to the day outside a premonitory tinge of dusk. A scale model of the new state capitol stood displayed on a pedestal in the middle of the room, ablaze with tiny electric bulbs.

Mrs. Ralston Holcombe presided over the tea table. Each guest accepted a fragile cup of transparent porcelain, took two delicate sips and vanished in the direction of the bar. Two stately butlers went about collecting the abandoned cups.

Mrs. Ralston Holcombe, as an enthusiastic girl friend had described her, was "petite, but intellectual." Her diminutive stature was her secret sorrow, but she had learned to find compensations. She could talk, and did, of wearing dresses size ten and of shopping in the junior departments. She wore high-school garments and short socks in summer, displaying spindly legs with hard blue veins. She adored celebrities. That was her mission in life. She hunted them grimly; she faced them with wide-eyed admiration and spoke of her own insignificance, of her humility before achievement; she shrugged, tight-lipped and rancorous, whenever one of them did not seem to take sufficient account of her own views on life after death, the theory of relativity, Aztec architecture, birth control and the movies. She had a great many poor friends and advertised the fact. If a friend happened to improve his financial position, she dropped him, feeling that he had committed an act of treason. She hated the wealthy in all sincerity: they shared her only badge of distinction. She considered architecture her private domain. She had been christened Constance and found it awfully clever to be known as "Kiki," a nickname she had forced on her friends when she was well past thirty.

Keating had never felt comfortable in Mrs. Holcombe's presence, because she smiled at him too insistently and commented on his remarks by winking and saying: "Why, Peter, how naughty of you!" when no such intention had been in his mind at all. He bowed over her hand, however, this afternoon as usual, and she smiled from behind the silver teapot. She wore a regal gown of emerald velvet, and a magenta ribbon in her bobbed hair with a cute little bow in front. Her skin was tanned and dry, with enlarged pores showing on her nostrils. She handed a cup to Keating, a square-cut emerald glittering on her finger in the candlelight.

Keating expressed his admiration for the capitol and escaped to examine the model. He stood before it for a correct number of minutes, scalding his lips with the hot liquid that smelled of cloves. Holcombe, who never looked in the direction of the model and never missed a guest stopping before it, slapped Keating's shoulder and said something appropriate about young fellows learning the beauty of the style of the Renaissance. Then Keating wandered off, shook a few hands without enthusiasm, and glanced at his wrist watch, calculating the time when it would be permissible to leave. Then he stopped.

Beyond a broad arch, in a small library, with three young men beside her, he saw Dominique Francon.

She stood leaning against a column, a cocktail glass in her hand. She wore a

suit of black velvet; the heavy cloth, which transmitted no light rays, held her anchored to reality by stopping the light that flowed too freely through the flesh of her hands, her neck, her face. A white spark of fire flashed like a cold metallic cross in the glass she held, as if it were a lens gathering the diffused radiance of her skin.

Keating tore forward and found Francon in the crowd. "Well, Peter!" said Francon brightly. "Want me to get you a drink? Not so hot," he added, lowering his voice, "but the Manhattans aren't too bad."

"No," said Keating, "thanks."

"Entre nous," said Francon, winking at the model of the capitol, "it's a holy mess, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Keating. "Miserable proportions....That dome looks like Holcombe's face imitating a sunrise on the roof...." They had stopped in full view of the library and Keating's eyes were fixed on the girl in black, inviting Francon to notice it; he enjoyed having Francon in a trap.

"And the plan! The plan! Do you see that on the second floor...oh," said Francon, noticing.

He looked at Keating, then at the library, then at Keating again.

"Well," said Francon at last, "don't blame me afterward. You've asked for it. Come on."

They entered the library together. Keating stopped, correctly, but allowing his eyes an improper intensity, while Francon beamed with unconvincing cheeriness:

"Dominique, my dear! May I present?--this is Peter Keating, my own right hand. Peter--my daughter."

"How do you do," said Keating, his voice soft.

Dominique bowed gravely.

"I have waited to meet you for such a long time, Miss Francon."

"This will be interesting," said Dominique. "You will want to be nice to me, of course, and yet that won't be diplomatic."

"What do you mean, Miss Francon?"

"Father would prefer you to be horrible with me. Father and I don't get along at all."

"Why, Miss Francon, I..."

"I think it's only fair to tell you this at the beginning. You may want to redraw some conclusions." He was looking for Francon, but Francon had vanished. "No," she said softly, "Father doesn't do these things well at all. He's too obvious. You asked him for the introduction, but he shouldn't have let me notice that. However, it's quite all right, since we both admit it. Sit down."

She slipped into a chair and he sat down obediently beside her. The young men whom he did not know stood about for a few minutes, trying to be included in the conversation by smiling blankly, then wandered off. Keating thought with relief

that there was nothing frightening about her; there was only a disquieting contrast between her words and the candid innocence of the manner she used to utter them; he did not know which to trust.

"I admit I asked for the introduction," he said. "That's obvious anyway, isn't it? Who wouldn't ask for it? But don't you think that the conclusions I'll draw may have nothing to do with your father?"

"Don't say that I'm beautiful and exquisite and like no one you've ever met before and that you're very much afraid that you're going to fall in love with me. You'll say it eventually, but let's postpone it. Apart from that, I think we'll get along very nicely."

"But you're trying to make it very difficult for me, aren't you?"

"Yes. Father should have warned you."

"He did."

"You should have listened. Be very considerate of Father. I've met so many of his own right hands that I was beginning to be skeptical. But you're the first one who's lasted. And who looks like he's going to last. I've heard a great deal about you. My congratulations."

"I've been looking forward to meeting you for years. And I've been reading your column with so much..." He stopped. He knew he shouldn't have mentioned that; and, above all, he shouldn't have stopped.

"So much...?" she asked gently.

"...so much pleasure," he finished, hoping that she would let it go at that.

"Oh, yes," she said. "The Ainsworth house. You designed it. I'm sorry. You just happened to be the victim of one of my rare attacks of honesty. I don't have them often. As you know, if you're read my stuff yesterday."

"I've read it. And--well, I'll follow your example and I'll be perfectly frank. Don't take it as a complaint--one must never complain against one's critics. But really that capitol of Holcombe's is much worse in all those very things that you blasted us for. Why did you give him such a glowing tribute yesterday? Or did you have to?"

"Don't flatter me. Of course I didn't have to. Do you think anyone on the paper pays enough attention to a column on home decoration to care what I say in it? Besides, I'm not even supposed to write about capitols. Only I'm getting tired of home decorations."

"Then why did you praise Holcombe?"

"Because that capitol of his is so awful that to pan it would have been an anticlimax. So I thought it would be amusing to praise it to the sky. It was."

"Is that the way you go about it?"

"That's the way I go about it. But no one reads my column, except housewives who can never afford to decorate their homes, so it doesn't matter at all."

"But what do you really like in architecture?"

"I don't like anything in architecture."

"Well, you know of course that I won't believe that. Why do you write if you have nothing you want to say?"

"To have something to do. Something more disgusting than many other things I could do. And more amusing."

"Come on, that's not a good reason."

"I never have any good reasons."

"But you must be enjoying your work."

"I am. Don't you see that I am?"

"You know, I've actually envied you. Working for a magnificent enterprise like the Wynand papers. The largest organization in the country, commanding the best writing talent and..."

"Look," she said, leaning toward him confidentially, "let me help you. If you had just met Father, and he were working for the Wynand papers, that would be exactly the right thing to say. But not with me. That's what I'd expect you to say and I don't like to hear what I expect. It would be much more interesting if you said that the Wynand papers are a contemptible dump heap of yellow journalism and all their writers put together aren't worth two bits."

"Is that what you really think of them?"

"Not at all. But I don't like people who try to say only what they think I think."

"Thanks. I'll need your help. I've never met anyone...oh, no, of course, that's what you didn't want me to say. But I really meant it about your papers. I've always admired Gail Wynand. I've always wished I could meet him. What is he like?"

"Just what Austen Heller called him—an exquisite bastard." He winced. He remembered where he had heard Austen Heller say that. The memory of Catherine seemed heavy and vulgar in the presence of the thin white hand he saw hanging over the arm of the chair before him.

"But, I mean," he asked, "what's he like in person?"

"I don't know. I've never met him."

"You haven't?"

"No."

"Oh, I've heard he's so interesting!"

"Undoubtedly. When I'm in a mood for something decadent I'll probably meet him."

"Do you know Toohey?"

"Oh," she said. He saw what he had seen in her eyes before, and he did not like the sweet gaiety of her voice. "Oh, Ellsworth Toohey. Of course I know him. He's wonderful. He's a man I always enjoy talking to. He's such a perfect

black-guard."

"Why, Miss Francon! You're the first person who's ever..."

"I'm not trying to shock you. I meant all of it. I admire him. He's so complete. You don't meet perfection often in this world one way or the other, do you? And he's just that. Sheer perfection in his own way. Everyone else is so unfinished, broken up into so many different pieces that don't fit together. But not Toohey. He's a monolith. Sometimes, when I feel bitter against the world, I find consolation in thinking that it's all right, that I'll be avenged, that the world will get what's coming to it--because there's Ellsworth Toohey."

"What do you want to be avenged for?" She looked at him, her eyelids lifted for a moment, so that her eyes did not seem rectangular, but soft and clear.

"That was very clever of you," she said. "That was the first clever thing you've said."

"Why?"

"Because you knew what to pick out of all the rubbish I uttered. So I'll have to answer you. I'd like to be avenged for the fact that I have nothing to be avenged for. Now let's go on about Ellsworth Toohey."

"Well, I've always heard, from everybody, that he's a sort of saint, the one pure idealist, utterly incorruptible and..."

"That's quite true. A plain grafter would be much safer. But Toohey is like a testing stone for people. You can learn about them by the way they take him."

"Why? What do you actually mean?" She leaned back in her chair, and stretched her arms down to her knees, twisting her wrists, palms out, the fingers of her two hands entwined. She laughed easily.

"Nothing that one should make a subject of discussion at a tea party. Kiki's right. She hates the sight of me, but she's got to invite me once in a while. And I can't resist coming, because she's so obvious about not wanting me. You know, I told Ralston tonight what I really thought of his capitol, but he wouldn't believe me. He only beamed and said that I was a very nice little girl."

"Well, aren't you?"

"What?"

"A very nice little girl."

"No. Not today. I've made you thoroughly uncomfortable. So I'll make up for it. I'll tell you what I think of you, because you'll be worrying about that. I think you're smart and safe and obvious and quite ambitious and you'll get away with it. And I like you. I'll tell Father that I approve of his right hand very much, so you see you have nothing to fear from the boss's daughter. Though it would be better if I didn't say anything to Father, because my recommendation would work the other way with him."

"May I tell you only one thing that I think about you?"

"Certainly. Any number of them."

"I think it would have been better if you hadn't told me that you liked me. Then I would have had a better chance of its being true."

She laughed.

"If you understand that," she said, "then we'll get along beautifully. Then it might even be true."

Gordon L. Prescott appeared in the arch of the ballroom, glass in hand. He wore a gray suit and a turtle-neck sweater of silver wool. His boyish face looked freshly scrubbed, and he had his usual air of soap, tooth paste and the outdoors.

"Dominique, darling!" he cried, waving his glass. "Hello, Keating," he added curtly. "Dominique, where have you been hiding yourself? I heard you were here and I've had a hell of a time looking for you!"

"Hello, Gordon," she said. She said it quite correctly; there was nothing offensive in the quiet politeness of her voice; but following his high note of enthusiasm, her voice struck a tone that seemed flat and deadly in its indifference--as if the two sounds mingled into an audible counterpoint around the melodic thread of her contempt.

Prescott had not heard. "Darling," he said, "you look lovelier every time I see you. One wouldn't think it were possible."

"Seventh time," said Dominique.

"What?"

"Seventh time that you've said it when meeting me, Gordon. I'm counting them."

"You simply won't be serious, Dominique. You'll never be serious."

"Oh, yes, Gordon. I was just having a very serious conversation here with my friend Peter Keating."

A lady waved to Prescott and he accepted the opportunity, escaping, looking very foolish. And Keating delighted in the thought that she had dismissed another man for a conversation she wished to continue with her friend Peter Keating.

But when he turned to her, she asked sweetly: "What was it we were talking about, Mr. Keating?" And then she was staring with too great an interest across the room, at the wizened figure of a little man coughing over a whisky glass. "Why," said Keating, "we were..."

"Oh, there's Eugene Pettingill. My great favorite. I must say hello to Eugene."

And she was up, moving across the room, her body leaning back as she walked, moving toward the most unattractive septuagenarian present.

Keating did not know whether he had been made to join the brotherhood of Gordon L. Prescott, or whether it had been only an accident.

He returned to the ballroom reluctantly. He forced himself to join groups of guests and to talk. He watched Dominique Francon as she moved through the crowd, as she stopped in conversation with others. She never glanced at him again. He could not decide whether he had succeeded with her or failed miserably.

He managed to be at the door when she was leaving.

She stopped and smiled at him enchantingly.

"No," she said, before he could utter a word, "you can't take me home. I have a car waiting. Thank you just the same."

She was gone and he stood at the door, helpless and thinking furiously that he believed he was blushing.

He felt a soft hand on his shoulder and turned to find Francon beside him.

"Going home, Peter? Let me give you a lift."

"But I thought you had to be at the club by seven."

"Oh, that's all right, I'll be a little late, doesn't matter, I'll drive you home, no trouble at all." There was a peculiar expression of purpose on Francon's face, quite unusual for him and unbecoming.

Keating followed him silently, amused, and said nothing when they were alone in the comfortable twilight of Francon's car.

"Well?" Francon asked ominously.

Keating smiled. "You're a pig, Guy. You don't know how to appreciate what you've got. Why didn't you tell me? She's the most beautiful woman I've ever seen."

"Oh, yes," said Francon darkly. "Maybe that's the trouble."

"What trouble? Where do you see any trouble?"

"What do you really think of her, Peter? Forget the looks. You'll see how quickly you'll forget that. What do you think?"

"Well, I think she has a great deal of character."

"Thanks for the understatement."

Francon was gloomily silent, and then he said with an awkward little note of something like hope in his voice:

"You know, Peter, I was surprised. I watched you, and you had quite a long chat with her. That's amazing. I fully expected her to chase you away with one nice, poisonous crack. Maybe you could get along with her, after all. I've concluded that you just can't tell anything about her. Maybe... You know, Peter, what I wanted to tell you is this: Don't pay any attention to what she said about my wanting you to be horrible with her."

The heavy earnestness of that sentence was such a hint that Keating's lips moved to shape a soft whistle, but he caught himself in time. Francon added heavily: "I don't want you to be horrible with her at all."

"You know, Guy," said Keating, in a tone of patronizing reproach, "you shouldn't have run away like that."

"I never know how to speak to her." He sighed. "I've never learned to. I can't understand what in blazes is the matter with her, but something is. She just won't behave like a human being. You know, she's been expelled from two

finishing schools. How she ever got through college I can't imagine, but I can tell you that I dreaded to open my mail for four solid years, waiting for word of the inevitable. Then I thought, well, once she's on her own I'm through and I don't have to worry about it, but she's worse than ever."

"What do you find to worry about?"

"I don't. I try not to. I'm glad when I don't have to think of her at all. I can't help it, I just wasn't cut out for a father. But sometimes I get to feel that it's my responsibility after all, though God knows I don't want it, but still there it is, I should do something about it, there's no one else to assume it."

"You've let her frighten you, Guy, and really there's nothing to be afraid of."

"You don't think so?"

"No."

"Maybe you're the man to handle her. I don't regret your meeting her now, and you know that I didn't want you to. Yes, I think you're the one man who could handle her. You...you're quite determined--aren't you, Peter?--when you're after something?"

"Well," said Keating, throwing one hand up in a careless gesture, "I'm not afraid very often."

Then he leaned back against the cushions, as if he were tired, as if he had heard nothing of importance, and he kept silent for the rest of the drive. Francon kept silent also.

#

"Boys," said John Erik Snyte, "don't spare yourselves on this. It's the most important thing we've had this year. Not much money, you understand, but the prestige, the connections! If we do land it, won't some of those great architects turn green! You see, Austen Heller has told me frankly that we're the third firm he's approached. He would have none of what those big fellows tried to sell him. So it's up to us, boys. You know, something different, unusual, but in good taste, and you know, different. Now do your best."

His five designers sat in a semicircle before him. "Gothic" looked bored and "Miscellaneous" looked discouraged in advance; "Renaissance" was following the course of a fly on the ceiling. Roark asked:

"What did he actually say, Mr. Snyte?"

Snyte shrugged and looked at Roark with amusement, as if he and Roark shared a shameful secret about the new client, not worth mentioning.

"Nothing that makes great sense--quite between us, boys," said Snyte. "He was somewhat inarticulate, considering his great command of the English language in print. He admitted he knew nothing about architecture. He didn't say whether he wanted it modernistic or period or what. He said something to the effect that he wanted a house of his own, but he's hesitated for a long time about building one because all houses look alike to him and they all look like hell and he doesn't see how anyone can become enthusiastic about any house, and yet he has the idea that he wants a building he could love. 'A building that would mean something' is what he said, though he added that he 'didn't know what or how.' There. That's about all he said. Not much to go on, and I wouldn't have undertaken to

submit sketches if it weren't Austen Heller. But I grant you that it doesn't make sense....What's the matter, Roark?"

"Nothing," said Roark.

This ended the first conference on the subject of a residence for Austen Heller.

Later that day Snyte crowded his five designers into a train, and they went to Connecticut to see the site Heller had chosen. They stood on a lonely, rocky stretch of shore, three miles beyond an unfashionable little town; they munched sandwiches and peanuts, and they looked at a cliff rising in broken ledges from the ground to end in a straight, brutal, naked drop over the sea, a vertical shaft of rock forming a cross with the long, pale horizontal of the sea.

"There," said Snyte. "That's it." He twirled a pencil in his hand. "Damnable, eh?" He sighed. "I tried to suggest a more respectable location, but he didn't take it so well so I had to shut up." He twirled the pencil. "That's where he wants the house, right on top of that rock." He scratched the tip of his nose with the point of the pencil. "I tried to suggest setting it farther back from the shore and keeping the damn rock for a view, but that didn't go so well either." He bit the eraser between the tips of his teeth. "Just think of the blasting, the leveling one's got to do on that top." He cleaned his fingernail with the lead, leaving a black mark. "Well, that's that....Observe the grade, and the quality of the stone. The approach will be difficult....I have all the surveys and the photographs in the office....Well...Who's got a cigarette?...Well, I think that's about all....I'll help you with suggestions anytime....Well...What time is that damn train back?"

Thus the five designers were started on their task. Four of them proceeded immediately at their drawing boards. Roark returned alone to the site, many times.

Roark's five months with Snyte stretched behind him like a blank. Had he wished to ask himself what he had felt, he would have found no answer, save in the fact that he remembered nothing of these months. He could remember each sketch he had made. He could, if he tried, remember what had happened to those sketches; he did not try.

But he had not loved any of them as he loved the house of Austen Heller. He stayed in the drafting room through evening after evening, alone with a sheet of paper and the thought of a cliff over the sea. No one saw his sketches until they were finished.

When they were finished, late one night, he sat at his table, with the sheets spread before him, sat for many hours, one hand propping his forehead, the other hanging by his side, blood gathering in the fingers, numbing them, while the street beyond the window became deep blue, then pale gray. He did not look at the sketches. He felt empty and very tired.

The house on the sketches had been designed not by Roark, but by the cliff on which it stood. It was as if the cliff had grown and completed itself and proclaimed the purpose for which it had been waiting. The house was broken into many levels, following the ledges of the rock, rising as it rose, in gradual masses, in planes flowing together up into one consummate harmony. The walls, of the same granite as the rock, continued its vertical lines upward; the wide, projecting terraces of concrete, silver as the sea, followed the line of the waves, of the straight horizon.

Roark was still sitting at his table when the men returned to begin their day in

the drafting room. Then the sketches were sent to Snyte's office.

Two days later, the final version of the house to be submitted to Austen Heller, the version chosen and edited by John Erik Snyte, executed by the Chinese artist, lay swathed in tissue paper on a table. It was Roark's house. His competitors had been eliminated. It was Roark's house, but its walls were now of red brick, its windows were cut to conventional size and equipped with green shutters, two of its projecting wings were omitted, the great cantilevered terrace over the sea was replaced by a little wrought-iron balcony, and the house was provided with an entrance of Ionic columns supporting a broken pediment, and with a little spire supporting a weather vane.

John Erik Snyte stood by the table, his two hands spread in the air over the sketch, without touching the virgin purity of its delicate colors.

"That is what Mr. Heller had in mind, I'm sure," he said. "Pretty good...Yes, pretty good...Roark, how many times do I have to ask you not to smoke around a final sketch? Stand away. You'll get ashes on it."

Austen Heller was expected at twelve o'clock. But at half past eleven Mrs. Symington arrived unannounced and demanded to see Mr. Snyte immediately. Mrs. Symington was an imposing dowager who had just moved into her new residence designed by Mr. Snyte; besides, Snyte expected a commission for an apartment house from her brother. He could not refuse to see her and he bowed her into his office, where she proceeded to state without reticence of expression that the ceiling of her library had cracked and the bay windows of her drawing room were hidden under a perpetual veil of moisture which she could not combat. Snyte summoned his chief engineer and they launched together into detailed explanations, apologies and damnations of contractors. Mrs. Symington showed no sign of relenting when a signal buzzed on Snyte's desk and the reception clerk's voice announced Austen Heller.

It would have been impossible to ask Mrs. Symington to leave or Austen Heller to wait. Snyte solved the problem by abandoning her to the soothing speech of his engineer and excusing himself for a moment. Then he emerged into the reception room, shook Heller's hand and suggested: "Would you mind stepping into the drafting room, Mr. Heller? Better light in there, you know, and the sketch is all ready for you, and I didn't want to take the chance of moving it."

Heller did not seem to mind. He followed Snyte obediently into the drafting room, a tall, broad-shouldered figure in English tweeds, with sandy hair and a square face drawn in countless creases around the ironical calm of the eyes.

The sketch lay on the Chinese artist's table, and the artist stepped aside diffidently, in silence. The next table was Roark's. He stood with his back to Heller; he went on with his drawing, and did not turn. The employees had been trained not to intrude on the occasions when Snyte brought a client into the drafting room.

Snyte's fingertips lifted the tissue paper, as if raising the veil of a bride. Then he stepped back and watched Heller's face. Heller bent down and stood hunched, drawn, intent, saying nothing for a long time.

"Listen, Mr. Snyte," he began at last. "Listen, I think..." and stopped.

Snyte waited patiently, pleased, sensing the approach of something he didn't want to disturb.

"This," said Heller suddenly, loudly, slamming his fist down on the drawing, and

Snyte winced, "this is the nearest anyone's ever come to it!"

"I knew you'd like it, Mr. Heller," said Snyte.

"I don't," said Heller.

Snyte blinked and waited.

"It's so near somehow," said Heller regretfully, "but it's not right. I don't know where, but it's not. Do forgive me, if this sounds vague, but I like things at once or I don't. I know that I wouldn't be comfortable, for instance, with that entrance. It's a lovely entrance, but you won't even notice it because you've seen it so often."

"Ah, but allow me to point out a few considerations, Mr. Heller. One wants to be modern, of course, but one wants to preserve the appearance of a home. A combination of stateliness and coziness, you understand, a very austere house like this must have a few softening touches. It is strictly correct architecturally."

"No doubt," said Heller. "I wouldn't know about that. I've never been strictly correct in my life."

"Just let me explain this scheme and you'll see that it's..."

"I know," said Heller wearily. "I know. I'm sure you're right. Only..." His voice had a sound of the eagerness he wished he could feel. "Only, if it had some unity, some...some central idea...which is there and isn't...if it seemed to live...which it doesn't...It lacks something and it has too much....If it were cleaner, more clear-cut...what's the word I've heard used?--if it were integrated..."

Roark turned. He was at the other side of the table. He seized the sketch, his hand flashed forward and a pencil ripped across the drawing, slashing raw black lines over the untouchable water-color. The lines blasted off the Ionic columns, the pediment, the entrance, the spire, the blinds, the bricks; they flung up two wings of stone; they rent the windows wide; they splintered the balcony and hurled a terrace over the sea.

It was being done before the others had grasped the moment when it began. Then Snyte jumped forward, but Heller seized his wrist and stopped him. Roark's hand went on razing walls, splitting, rebuilding in furious strokes.

Roark threw his head up once, for a flash of a second, to look at Heller across the table. It was all the introduction they needed; it was like a handshake. Roark went on, and when he threw the pencil down, the house--as he had designed it--stood completed in an ordered pattern of black streaks. The performance had not lasted five minutes.

Snyte made an attempt at a sound. As Heller said nothing, Snyte felt free to whirl on Roark and scream: "You're fired, God damn you! Get out of here! You're fired!"

"We're both fired," said Austen Heller, winking to Roark. "Come on. Have you had any lunch? Let's go some place. I want to talk to you."

Roark went to his locker to get his hat and coat. The drafting room witnessed a stupefying act and all work stopped to watch it: Austen Heller picked up the sketch, folded it over four times, cracking the sacred cardboard, and slipped it

into his pocket.

"But, Mr. Heller..." Snyte stammered, "let me explain...It's perfectly all right if that's what you want, we'll do the sketch over...let me explain..."

"Not now," said Heller. "Not now." He added at the door: "I'll send you a check."

Then Heller was gone, and Roark with him; and the door, as Heller swung it shut behind them, sounded like the closing paragraph in one of Heller's articles. Roark had not said a word.

In the softly lighted booth of the most expensive restaurant that Roark had ever entered, across the crystal and silver glittering between them, Heller was saying:

"...because that's the house I want, because that's the house I've always wanted. Can you build it for me, draw up the plans and supervise the construction?"

"Yes," said Roark.

"How long will it take if we start at once?"

"About eight months."

"I'll have the house by late fall?"

"Yes."

"Just like that sketch?"

"Just like that."

"Look, I have no idea what kind of a contract one makes with an architect and you must know, so draw up one and let my lawyer okay it this afternoon, will you?"

"Yes."

Heller studied the man who sat facing him. He saw the hand lying on the table before him. Heller's awareness became focused on that hand. He saw the long fingers, the sharp joints, the prominent veins. He had the feeling that he was not hiring this man, but surrendering himself into his employment. "How old are you," asked Heller, "whoever you are?"

"Twenty-six. Do you want any references?"

"Hell, no. I have them, here in my pocket. What's your name?"

"Howard Roark."

Heller produced a checkbook, spread it open on the table and reached for his fountain pen.

"Look," he said, writing, "I'll give you five hundred dollars on account. Get yourself an office or whatever you have to get, and go ahead."

He tore off the check and handed it to Roark, between the tips of two straight

fingers, leaning forward on his elbow, swinging his wrist in a sweeping curve. His eyes were narrowed, amused, watching Roark quizzically. But the gesture had the air of a salute.

The check was made out to "Howard Roark, Architect."

11.

HOWARD ROARK opened his own office.

It was one large room on the top of an old building, with a broad window high over the roofs. He could see the distant band of the Hudson at his window sill, with the small streaks of ships moving under his fingertips when he pressed them to the glass. He had a desk, two chairs, and a huge drafting table. The glass entrance door bore the words: "Howard Roark, Architect." He stood in the hall for a long time, looking at the words. Then he went in, and slammed his door, he picked up a T-square from the table and flung it down again, as if throwing an anchor.

John Erik Snyte had objected. When Roark came to the office for his drawing instruments Snyte emerged into the reception room, shook his hand warmly and said: "Well, Roark! Well, how are you? Come in, come right in, I want to speak to you!"

And with Roark seated before his desk Snyte proceeded loudly:

"Look, fellow, I hope you've got sense enough not to hold it against me, anything that I might've said yesterday. You know how it is, I lost my head a little, and it wasn't what you did, but that you had to go and do it on that sketch, that sketch...well, never mind. No hard feelings?"

"No," said Roark. "None at all."

"Of course, you're not fired. You didn't take me seriously, did you? You can go right back to work here this very minute."

"What for, Mr. Snyte?"

"What do you mean, what for? Oh, you're thinking of the Heller house? But you're not taking Heller seriously, are you? You saw how he is, that madman can change his mind sixty times a minute. He won't really give you that commission, you know, it isn't as simple as that, it isn't being done that way."

"We've signed the contract yesterday."

"Oh, you have? Well, that's splendid! Well, look, Roark, I'll tell you what we'll do: you bring the commission back to us and I'll let you put your name on it with mine--'John Erik Snyte & Howard Roark.' And we'll split the fee. That's in addition to your salary--and you're getting a raise, incidentally. Then we'll have the same arrangement on any other commission you bring in. And...Lord, man, what are you laughing at?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Snyte. I'm sorry."

"I don't believe you understand," said Snyte, bewildered. "Don't you see? It's your insurance. You don't want to break loose just yet. Commissions won't fall into your lap like this. Then what will you do? This way, you'll have a steady

job and you'll be building toward independent practice, if that's what you're after. In four or five years, you'll be ready to take the leap. That's the way everybody does it. You see?"

"Yes."

"Then you agree?"

"No."

"But, good Lord, man, you've lost your mind! To set up alone now! Without experience, without connections, without...well, without anything at all! I never heard of such a thing. Ask anybody in the profession. See what they'll tell you. It's preposterous!"

"Probably."

"Listen. Roark, won't you please listen?"

"I'll listen if you want me to, Mr. Snyte. But I think I should tell you now that nothing you can say will make any difference. If you don't mind that, I don't mind listening."

Snyte went on speaking for a long time and Roark listened, without objecting, explaining or answering.

"Well, if that's how you are, don't expect me to take you back when you find yourself on the pavement."

"I don't expect it, Mr. Snyte."

"Don't expect anyone else in the profession to take you in, after they hear what you've done to me."

"I don't expect that either."

For a few days Snyte thought of suing Roark and Heller. But he decided against it, because there was no precedent to follow under the circumstances: because Heller had paid him for his efforts, and the house had been actually designed by Roark; and because no one ever sued Austen Heller. The first visitor to Roark's office was Peter Keating. He walked in, without warning, one noon, walked straight across the room and sat down on Roark's desk, smiling gaily, spreading his arms wide in a sweeping gesture: "Well, Howard!" he said. "Well, fancy that!" He had not seen Roark for a year. "Hello, Peter," said Roark.

"Your own office, your own name and everything! Already! Just imagine!"

"Who told you, Peter?"

"Oh, one hears things. You wouldn't expect me not to keep track of your career, now would you? You know what I've always thought of you. And I don't have to tell you that I congratulate you and wish you the very best."

"No, you don't have to."

"Nice place you got here. Light and roomy. Not quite as imposing as it should be, perhaps, but what can one expect at the beginning? And then, the prospects are uncertain, aren't they, Howard?"

"Quite."

"It's an awful chance that you've taken."

"Probably."

"Are you really going to go through with it? I mean, on your own?"

"Looks that way, doesn't it?"

"Well, it's not too late, you know. I thought, when I heard the story, that you'd surely turn it over to Snyte and make a smart deal with him."

"I didn't."

"Aren't you really going to?"

"No."

Keating wondered why he should experience that sickening feeling of resentment; why he had come here hoping to find the story untrue, hoping to find Roark uncertain and willing to surrender. That feeling had haunted him ever since he'd heard the news about Roark; the sensation of something unpleasant that remained after he'd forgotten the cause. The feeling would come back to him, without reason, a blank wave of anger, and he would ask himself: now what the hell?--what was it I heard today? Then he would remember: Oh, yes, Roark--Roark's opened his own office. He would ask himself impatiently: So what?--and know at the same time that the words were painful to face, and humiliating like an insult.

"You know, Howard, I admire your courage. Really, you know, I've had much more experience and I've got more of a standing in the profession, don't mind my saying it--I'm only speaking objectively--but I wouldn't dare take such a step."

"No, you wouldn't."

"So you've made the jump first. Well, well. Who would have thought it?...I wish you all the luck in the world."

"Thank you, Peter."

"I know you'll succeed. I'm sure of it."

"Are you?"

"Of course! Of course, I am. Aren't you?"

"I haven't thought of it."

"You haven't thought of it?"

"Not much."

"Then you're not sure, Howard? You aren't?"

"Why do you ask that so eagerly?"

"What? Why...no, not eagerly, but of course, I'm concerned, Howard, it's bad psychology not to be certain now, in your position. So you have doubts?"

"None at all."

"But you said..."

"I'm quite sure of things, Peter."

"Have you thought about getting your registration?"

"I've applied for it."

"You've got no college degree, you know. They'll make it difficult for you at the examination."

"Probably."

"What are you going to do if you don't get the license?"

"I'll get it."

"Well, I guess I'll be seeing you now at the A.G.A., if you don't go high hat on me, because you'll be a full-fledged member and I'm only a junior."

"I'm not joining the A.G.A."

"What do you mean, you're not joining? You're eligible now."

"Possibly."

"You'll be invited to join."

"Tell them not to bother."

"What!"

"You know, Peter, we had a conversation just like this seven years ago, when you tried to talk me into joining your fraternity at Stanton. Don't start it again."

"You won't join the A.G.A. when you have a chance to?"

"I won't join anything, Peter, at any time."

"But don't you realize how it helps?"

"In what?"

"In being an architect."

"I don't like to be helped in being an architect."

"You're just making things harder for yourself."

"I am."

"And it will be plenty hard, you know."

"I know."

"You'll make enemies of them if you refuse such an invitation."

"I'll make enemies of them anyway."

The first person to whom Roark had told the news was Henry Cameron. Roark went to New Jersey the day after he signed the contract with Heller. It had rained and he found Cameron in the garden, shuffling slowly down the damp paths, leaning heavily on a cane. In the past winter, Cameron had improved enough to walk a few hours each day. He walked with effort, his body bent.

He looked at the first shoots of green on the earth under his feet. He lifted his cane, once in a while, bracing his legs to stand firm for a moment; with the tip of the cane, he touched a folded green cup and watched it spill a glistening drop in the twilight. He saw Roark coming up the hill, and frowned. He had seen Roark only a week ago, and because these visits meant too much to both of them, neither wished the occasion to be too frequent.

"Well?" Cameron asked gruffly. "What do you want here again?"

"I have something to tell you."

"It can wait."

"I don't think so."

"Well?"

"I'm opening my own office. I've just signed for my first building."

Cameron rotated his cane, the tip pressed into the earth, the shaft describing a wide circle, his two hands bearing down on the handle, the palm of one on the back of the other. His head nodded slowly, in rhythm with the motion, for a long time, his eyes closed. Then he looked at Roark and said:

"Well, don't brag about it."

He added: "Help me to sit down." It was the first time Cameron had ever pronounced this sentence; his sister and Roark had long since learned that the one outrage forbidden in his presence was any intention of helping him to move.

Roark took his elbow and led him to a bench. Cameron asked harshly, staring ahead at the sunset:

"What? For whom? How much?"

He listened silently to Roark's story. He looked for a long time at the sketch on cracked cardboard with the pencil lines over the watercolor. Then he asked many questions about the stone, the steel, the roads, the contractors, the costs. He offered no congratulations. He made no comment.

Only when Roark was leaving, Cameron said suddenly:

"Howard, when you open your office, take snapshots of it--and show them to me."

Then he shook his head, looked away guiltily, and swore.

"I'm being senile. Forget it."

Roark said nothing.

Three days later he came back. "You're getting to be a nuisance," said Cameron. Roark handed him an envelope, without a word. Cameron looked at the snapshots, at the one of the broad, bare office, of the wide window, of the entrance door. He dropped the others, and held the one of the entrance door for a long time.

"Well," he said at last, "I did live to see it."

He dropped the snapshot.

"Not quite exactly," he added. "Not in the way I had wanted to, but I did. It's like the shadows some say we'll see of the earth in that other world. Maybe that's how I'll see the rest of it. I'm learning."

He picked up the snapshot.

"Howard," he said. "Look at it."

He held it between them.

"It doesn't say much. Only 'Howard Roark, Architect.' But it's like those mottoes men carved over the entrance of a castle and died for. It's a challenge in the face of something so vast and so dark, that all the pain on earth--and do you know how much suffering there is on earth?--all the pain comes from that thing you are going to face. I don't know what it is, I don't know why it should be unleashed against you. I know only that it will be. And I know that if you carry these words through to the end, it will be a victory, Howard, not just for you, but for something that should win, that moves the world--and never wins acknowledgment. It will vindicate so many who have fallen before you, who have suffered as you will suffer. May God bless you--or whoever it is that is alone to see the best, the highest possible to human hearts. You're on your way into hell, Howard."

#

Roark walked up the path to the top of the cliff where the steel hulk of the Heller house rose into a blue sky. The skeleton was up and the concrete was being poured; the great mats of the terraces hung over the silver sheet of water quivering far below; plumbers and electricians had started laying their conduits.

He looked at the squares of sky delimited by the slender lines of girders and columns, the empty cubes of space he had torn out of the sky. His hands moved involuntarily, filling in the planes of walls to come, enfolding the future rooms. A stone clattered from under his feet and went bouncing down the hill, resonant drops of sound rolling in the sunny clarity of the summer air.

He stood on the summit, his legs planted wide apart, leaning back against space. He looked at the materials before him, the knobs of rivets in steel, the sparks in blocks of stone, the weaving spirals in fresh, yellow planks.

Then he saw a husky figure enmeshed in electric wires, a bulldog face spreading into a huge grin and china-blue eyes gloating in a kind of unholy triumph.

"Mike!" he said incredulously.

Mike had left for a big job in Philadelphia months ago, long before the appearance of Heller in Snyte's office, and Mike had never heard the news--or so he supposed.

"Hello, Red," said Mike, much too casually, and added: "Hello, boss."

"Mike, how did you...?"

"You're a hell of an architect. Neglecting the job like that. It's my third day here, waiting for you to show up."

"Mike, how did you get here? Why such a come-down?" He had never known Mike to bother with small private residences.

"Don't play the sap. You know how I got here. You didn't think I'd miss it, your first house, did you? And you think it's a come-down? Well, maybe it is. And maybe it's the other way around."

Roark extended his hand and Mike's grimy fingers closed about it ferociously, as if the smudges he left implanted in Roark's skin said everything he wanted to say. And because he was afraid that he might say it, Mike growled:

"Run along, boss, run along. Don't clog up the works like that."

Roark walked through the house. There were moments when he could be precise, impersonal, and stop to give instructions as if this were not his house but only a mathematical problem; when he felt the existence of pipes and rivets, while his own person vanished.

There were moments when something rose within him, not a thought nor a feeling, but a wave of some physical violence, and then he wanted to stop, to lean back, to feel the reality of his person heightened by the frame of steel that rose dimly about the bright, outstanding existence of his body as its center. He did not stop. He went on calmly. But his hands betrayed what he wanted to hide. His hands reached out, ran slowly down the beams and joints. The workers in the house had noticed it. They said: "That guy's in love with the thing. He can't keep his hands off."

The workers liked him. The contractor's superintendents did not. He had had trouble in finding a contractor to erect the house. Several of the better firms had refused the commission. "We don't do that kinda stuff."

"Nan, we won't bother. Too complicated for a small job like that."

"Who the hell wants that kind of house? Most likely we'll never collect from the crank afterwards. To hell with it."

"Never did anything like it. Wouldn't know how to go about it. I'll stick to construction that is construction." One contractor had looked at the plans briefly and thrown them aside, declaring with finality: "It won't stand."

"It will," said Roark. The contractor drawled indifferently. "Yeah? And who are you to tell me, Mister?"

He had found a small firm that needed the work and undertook it, charging more than the job warranted--on the ground of the chance they were taking with a queer experiment. The construction went on, and the foremen obeyed sullenly, in disapproving silence, as if they were waiting for their predictions to come true and would be glad when the house collapsed about their heads. Roark had bought an old Ford and drove down to the job more often than was necessary. It was difficult to sit at a desk in his office, to stand at a table, forcing himself to stay away from the construction site. At the site there were moments when he

wished to forget his office and his drawing board, to seize the men's tools and go to work on the actual erection of the house, as he had worked in his childhood, to build that house with his own hands.

He walked through the structure, stepping lightly over piles of planks and coils of wire, he made notes, he gave brief orders in a harsh voice. He avoided looking in Mike's direction. But Mike was watching him, following his progress through the house. Mike winked at him in understanding, whenever he passed by. Mike said once:

"Control yourself, Red. You're open like a book. God, it's indecent to be so happy!"

Roark stood on the cliff, by the structure, and looked at the countryside, at the long, gray ribbon of the road twisting past along the shore. An open car drove by, fleeing into the country. The car was overfilled with people bound for a picnic. There was a jumble of bright sweaters, and scarves fluttering in the wind; a jumble of voices shrieking without purpose over the roar of the motor, and overstressed hiccoughs of laughter; a girl sat sidewise, her legs flung over the side of the car; she wore a man's straw hat slipping down to her nose and she yanked savagely at the strings of a ukulele, ejecting raucous sounds, yelling "Hey!" These people were enjoying a day of their existence; they were shrieking to the sky their release from the work and the burdens of the days behind them; they had worked and carried the burdens in order to reach a goal--and this was the goal.

He looked at the car as it streaked past. He thought that there was a difference, some important difference, between the consciousness of this day in him and in them. He thought that he should try to grasp it. But he forgot. He was looking at a truck panting up the hill, loaded with a glittering mound of cut granite.

#

Austen Heller came to look at the house frequently, and watched it grow, curious, still a little astonished. He studied Roark and the house with the same meticulous scrutiny; he felt as if he could not quite tell them apart.

Heller, the fighter against compulsion, was baffled by Roark, a man so impervious to compulsion that he became a kind of compulsion himself, an ultimatum against things Heller could not define. Within a week, Heller knew that he had found the best friend he would ever have; and he knew that the friendship came from Roark's fundamental indifference. In the deeper reality of Roark's existence there was no consciousness of Heller, no need for Heller, no appeal, no demand. Heller felt a line drawn, which he could not touch; beyond that line, Roark asked nothing of him and granted him nothing. But when Roark looked at him with approval, when Roark smiled, when Roark praised one of his articles, Heller felt the strangely clean joy of a sanction that was neither a bribe nor alms.

In the summer evenings they sat together on a ledge halfway up the hill, and talked while darkness mounted slowly up the beams of the house above them, the last sunrays retreating to the tips of the steel uprights.

"What is it that I like so much about the house you're building for me, Howard?"

"A house can have integrity, just like a person," said Roark, "and just as seldom."

"In what way?"

"Well, look at it. Every piece of it is there because the house needs it--and for no other reason. You see it from here as it is inside. The rooms in which you'll live made the shape. The relation of masses was determined by the distribution of space within. The ornament was determined by the method of construction, an emphasis of the principle that makes it stand. You can see each stress, each support that meets it. Your own eyes go through a structural process when you look at the house, you can follow each step, you see it rise, you know what made it and why it stands. But you've seen buildings with columns that support nothing, with purposeless cornices, with pilasters, moldings, false arches, false windows. You've seen buildings that look as if they contained a single large hall, they have solid columns and single, solid windows six floors high. But you enter and find six stories inside. Or buildings that contain a single hall, but with a facade cut up into floor lines, band courses, tiers of windows. Do you understand the difference? Your house is made by its own needs. Those others are made by the need to impress. The determining motive of your house is in the house. The determining motive of the others is in the audience."

"Do you know that that's what I've felt in a way? I've felt that when I move into this house, I'll have a new sort of existence, and even my simple daily routine will have a kind of honesty or dignity that I can't quite define. Don't be astonished if I tell you that I feel as if I'll have to live up to that house."

"I intended that," said Roark.

"And, incidentally, thank you for all the thought you seem to have taken about my comfort. There are so many things I notice that had never occurred to me before, but you've planned them as if you knew all my needs. For instance, my study is the room I'll need most and you've given it the dominant spot--and, incidentally, I see where you've made it the dominant mass from the outside, too. And then the way it connects with the library, and the living room well out of my way, and the guest rooms where I won't hear too much of them--and all that. You were very considerate of me."

"You know," said Roark. "I haven't thought of you at all. I thought of the house." He added: "Perhaps that's why I knew how to be considerate of you."
#

The Heller house was completed in November of 1926.

In January of 1927 the Architectural Tribune published a survey of the best American homes erected during the past year. It devoted twelve large, glossy pages to photographs of the twenty-four houses its editors had selected as the worthiest architectural achievements. The Heller house was not mentioned.

The real-estate sections of the New York papers presented, each Sunday, brief accounts of the notable new residences in the vicinity. There was no account of the Heller house.

The year book of the Architects' Guild of America, which presented magnificent reproductions of what it chose as the best buildings of the country, under the title "Looking Forward," gave no reference to the Heller house.

There were many occasions when lecturers rose to platforms and addressed trim audiences on the subject of the progress of American architecture. No one spoke of the Heller house.

In the club rooms of the A.G.A. some opinions were expressed.

"It's a disgrace to the country," said Ralston Holcombe, "that a thing like that Heller house is allowed to be erected. It's a blot on the profession. There ought to be a law."

"That's what drives clients away," said John Erik Snyte. "They see a house like that and they think all architects are crazy."

"I see no cause for indignation," said Gordon L. Prescott. "I think it's screamingly funny. It looks like a cross between a filling station and a comic-strip idea of a rocket ship to the moon."

"You watch it in a couple of years," said Eugene Pettingill, "and see what happens. The thing'll collapse like a house of cards."

"Why speak in terms of years?" said Guy Francon. "Those modernistic stunts never last more than a season. The owner will get good and sick of it and he'll come running home to a good old early Colonial."

The Heller house acquired fame throughout the countryside surrounding it. People drove out of their way to park on the road before it, to stare, point and giggle. Gas-station attendants snickered when Heller's car drove past. Heller's cook had to endure the derisive glances of shopkeepers when she went on her errands. The Heller house was known in the neighborhood as "The Booby Hatch."

Peter Keating told his friends in the profession, with an indulgent smile: "Now, now, you shouldn't say that about him. I've known Howard Roark for a long time, and he's got quite a talent, quite. He's even worked for me once. He's just gone haywire on that house. He'll learn. He has a future.... Oh, you don't think he has? You really don't think he has?"

Ellsworth M. Toohey, who let no stone spring from the ground of America without his comment, did not know that the Heller house had been erected, as far as his column was concerned. He did not consider it necessary to inform his readers about it, if only to damn it. He said nothing.

12.

A COLUMN entitled "Observations and Meditations" by Alvah Scarret appeared daily on the front page of the New York Banner. It was a trusted guide, a source of inspiration and a mold of public philosophy in small towns throughout the country. In this column there had appeared, years ago, the famous statement: "We'd all be a heap sight better off if we'd forget the highfalutin notions of our fancy civilization and mind more what the savages knew long before us: to honor our mother." Alvah Scarret was a bachelor, had made two millions dollars, played golf expertly and was editor-in-chief of the Wynand papers.

It was Alvah Scarret who conceived the idea of the campaign against living conditions in the slums and "Landlord Sharks," which ran in the Banner for three weeks. This was material such as Alvah Scarret relished. It had human appeal and social implications. It lent itself to Sunday-supplement illustrations of girls leaping into rivers, their skirts flaring well above their knees. It boosted circulation. It embarrassed the sharks who owned a stretch of blocks by the East River, selected as the dire example of the campaign. The sharks had refused to sell these blocks to an obscure real-estate company; at the end of the campaign they surrendered and sold. No one could prove that the real-estate company was owned by a company owned by Gail Wynand.

The Wynand papers could not be left without a campaign for long. They had just concluded one on the subject of modern aviation. They had run scientific accounts of the history of aviation in the Sunday Family Magazine supplement, with pictures ranging from Leonardo da Vinci's drawings of flying machines to the latest bomber; with the added attraction of Icarus writhing in scarlet flames, his nude body blue-green, his wax wings yellow and the smoke purple; also of a leprous hag with flaming eyes and a crystal ball, who had predicted in the XIth century that man would fly; also of bats, vampires and werewolves.

They had run a model plane construction contest; it was open to all boys under the age of ten who wished to send in three new subscriptions to the Banner. Gail Wynand, who was a licensed pilot, had made a solo flight from Los Angeles to New York, establishing a transcontinental speed record, in a small, specially built craft costing one hundred thousand dollars. He had made a slight miscalculation on reaching New York and had been forced to land in a rocky pasture; it had been a hair-raising landing, faultlessly executed; it had just so happened that a battery of photographers from the Banner were present in the neighborhood. Gail Wynand had stepped out of the plane. An ace pilot would have been shaken by the experience. Gail Wynand had stood before the cameras, an immaculate gardenia in the lapel of his flying jacket, his hand raised with a cigarette held between two fingers that did not tremble. When questioned about his first wish on returning to earth, he had expressed the desire to kiss the most attractive woman present, had chosen the dowdiest old hag from the crowd and bent to kiss her gravely on the forehead, explaining that she reminded him of his mother.

Later, at the start of the slum campaign, Gail Wynand had said to Alvah Scarret; "Go ahead. Squeeze all you can out of the thing," and had departed on his yacht for a world cruise, accompanied by an enchanting aviatrix of twenty-four to whom he had made a present of his transcontinental plane.

Alvah Scarret went ahead. Among many other steps of his campaign he assigned Dominique Francon to investigate the condition of homes in the slums and to gather human material. Dominique Francon had just returned from a summer in Biarritz; she always took a whole summer's vacation and Alvah Scarret granted it, because she was one of his favorite employees, because he was baffled by her and because he knew that she could quit her job whenever she pleased.

Dominique Francon went to live for two weeks in the hall bedroom of an East-Side tenement. The room had a skylight, but no windows; there were five flights of stairs to climb and no running water. She cooked her own meals in the kitchen of a numerous family on the floor below; she visited neighbors, she sat on the landings of fire escapes in the evenings and went to dime movies with the girls of the neighborhood.

She wore frayed skirts and blouses. The abnormal fragility of her normal appearance made her look exhausted with privation in these surroundings; the neighbors felt certain that she had TB. But she moved as she had moved in the drawing room of Kiki Holcombe--with the same cold poise and confidence. She scrubbed the floor of her room, she peeled potatoes, she bathed in a tin pan of cold water. She had never done these things before; she did them expertly. She had a capacity for action, a competence that clashed incongruously with her appearance. She did not mind this new background; she was indifferent to the slums as she had been indifferent to the drawing rooms.

At the end of two weeks she returned to her penthouse apartment on the roof of a hotel over Central Park, and her articles on life in the slums appeared in the Banner. They were a merciless, brilliant account.

She heard baffled questions at a dinner party. "My dear, you didn't actually write those things?"

"Dominique, you didn't really live in that place?"

"Oh, yes," she answered. "The house you own on East Twelfth Street, Mrs. Palmer," she said, her hand circling lazily from under the cuff of an emerald bracelet too broad and heavy for her thin wrist, "has a sewer that gets clogged every other day and runs over, all through the courtyard. It looks blue and purple in the sun, like a rainbow."

"The block you control for the Claridge estate, Mr. Brooks, has the most attractive stalactites growing on all the ceilings," she said, her golden head leaning to her corsage of white gardenias with drops of water sparkling on the lusterless petals.

She was asked to speak at a meeting of social workers. It was an important meeting, with a militant, radical mood, led by some of the most prominent women in the field. Alvah Scarret was pleased and gave her his blessing. "Go to it, kid," he said, "lay it on thick. We want the social workers." She stood in the speaker's pulpit of an unaired hall and looked at a flat sheet of faces, faces lecherously eager with the sense of their own virtue. She spoke evenly, without inflection. She said, among many other things: "The family on the first floor rear do not bother to pay their rent, and the children cannot go to school for lack of clothes. The father has a charge account at a corner speak-easy. He is in good health and has a good job....The couple on the second floor have just purchased a radio for sixty-nine dollars and ninety-five cents cash. In the fourth floor front, the father of the family has not done a whole day's work in his life, and does not intend to. There are nine children, supported by the local parish. There is a tenth one on its way..." When she finished there were a few claps of angry applause. She raised her hand and said: "You don't have to applaud. I don't expect it." She asked politely: "Are there any questions?" There were no questions.

When she returned home she found Alvah Scarret waiting for her. He looked incongruous in the drawing room of her penthouse, his huge bulk perched on the edge of a delicate chair, a hunched gargoyle against the glowing spread of the city beyond a solid wall of glass. The city was like a mural designed to illuminate and complete the room: the fragile lines of spires on a black sky continued the fragile lines of the furniture; the lights glittering in distant windows threw reflections on the bare, lustrous floor; the cold precision of the angular structures outside answered the cold, inflexible grace of every object within. Alvah Scarret broke the harmony. He looked like a kindly country doctor and like a cardsharp. His heavy face bore the benevolent, paternal smile that had always been his passkey and his trademark. He had the knack of making the kindness of his smile add to, not detract from his solemn appearance of dignity; his long, thin, hooked nose did detract from the kindness, but it added to the dignity; his stomach, cantilevered over his legs, did detract from the dignity, but it added to the kindness. He rose, beamed and held Dominique's hand. "Thought I'd drop in on my way home," he said. "I've got something to tell you. How did it go, kid?"

"As I expected it."

She tore her hat off and threw it down on the first chair in sight. Her hair slanted in a flat curve across her forehead and fell in a straight line to her shoulders; it looked smooth and tight, like a bathing cap of pale, polished metal. She walked to the window and stood looking out over the city. She asked without turning: "What did you want to tell me?"

Alvah Scarret watched her pleasurably. He had long since given up any attempts beyond holding her hand when not necessary or patting her shoulder; he had stopped thinking of the subject, but he had a dim, half-conscious feeling which he summed up to himself in the words: You never can tell.

"I've got good news for you, child," he said. "I've been working out a little scheme, just a bit of reorganization, and I've figured where I'll consolidate a few things together into a Women's Welfare Department. You know, the schools, the home economics, the care of babies, the juvenile delinquents and all the rest of it--all to be under one head. And I see no better woman for the job than my little girl."

"Do you mean me?" she asked, without turning.

"No one else but. Just as soon as Gail comes back, I'll get his okay."

She turned and looked at him, her arms crossed, her hands holding her elbows. She said:

"Thank you, Alvah. But I don't want it."

"What do you mean, you don't want it?"

"I mean that I don't want it."

"For heaven's sake, do you realize what an advance that would be?"

"Toward what?"

"Your career."

"I never said I was planning a career."

"But you don't want to be running a dinky back-page column forever!"

"Not forever. Until I get bored with it."

"But think of what you could do in the real game! Think of what Gail could do for you once you come to his attention!"

"I have no desire to come to his attention."

"But, Dominique, we need you. The women will be for you solid after tonight."

"I don't think so."

"Why, I've ordered two columns held for a yarn on the meeting and your speech."

She reached for the telephone and handed the receiver to him. She said:

"You'd better tell them to kill it."

"Why?"

She searched through a litter of papers on a desk, found some typewritten sheets and handed them to him. "Here's the speech I made tonight," she said.

He glanced through it. He said nothing, but clasped his forehead once. Then he

seized the telephone and gave orders to run as brief an account of the meeting as possible, and not to mention the speaker by name.

"All right," said Dominique, when he dropped the receiver. "Am I fired?"

He shook his head dolefully. "Do you want to be?"

"Not necessarily."

"I'll squash the business," he muttered. "I'll keep it from Gail."

"If you wish. I don't really care one way or the other."

"Listen, Dominique--oh I know, I'm not to ask any questions--only why on earth are you always doing things like that?"

"For no reason on earth."

"Look, you know, I've heard about that swank dinner where you made certain remarks on this same subject. And then you go and say things like these at a radical meeting."

"They're true, though, both sides of it, aren't they?"

"Oh, sure, but couldn't you have reversed the occasions when you chose to express them?"

"There wouldn't have been any point in that."

"Was there any in what you've done?"

"No. None at all. But it amused me."

"I can't figure you out, Dominique. You've done it before. You go along so beautifully, you do brilliant work and just when you're about to make a real step forward--you spoil it by pulling something like this. Why?"

"Perhaps that is precisely why."

"Will you tell me--as a friend, because I like you and I'm interested in you--what are you really after?"

"I should think that's obvious. I'm after nothing at all."

He spread his hands open, shrugging helplessly.

She smiled gaily.

"What is there to look so mournful about? I like you, too, Alvah, and I'm interested in you. I even like to talk to you, which is better. Now sit still and relax and I'll get you a drink. You need a drink, Alvah."

She brought him a frosted glass with ice cubes ringing in the silence. "You're just a nice child, Dominique," he said.

"Of course. That's what I am."

She sat down on the edge of a table, her hands flat behind her, leaning back on two straight arms, swinging her legs slowly. She said:

"You know, Alvah, it would be terrible if I had a job I really wanted."

"Well, of all things! Well, of all fool things to say! What do you mean?"

"Just that. That it would be terrible to have a job I enjoyed and did not want to lose."

"Why?"

"Because I would have to depend on you--you're a wonderful person, Alvah, but not exactly inspiring and I don't think it would be beautiful to cringe before a whip in your hand--oh, don't protest, it would be such a polite little whip, and that's what would make it uglier. I would have to depend on our boss Gail--he's a great man, I'm sure, only I'd just as soon never set eyes on him."

"Whatever gives you such a crazy attitude? When you know that Gail and I would do anything for you, and I personally..."

"It's not only that, Alvah. It's not you alone. If I found a job, a project, an idea or a person I wanted--I'd have to depend on the whole world. Everything has strings leading to everything else. We're all so tied together. We're all in a net, the net is waiting, and we're pushed into it by one single desire. You want a thing and it's precious to you. Do you know who is standing ready to tear it out of your hands? You can't know, it may be so involved and so far away, but someone is ready, and you're afraid of them all. And you cringe and you crawl and you beg and you accept them--just so they'll let you keep it. And look at whom you come to accept."

"If I'm correct in gathering that you're criticizing mankind in general..."

"You know, it's such a peculiar thing--our idea of mankind in general. We all have a sort of vague, glowing picture when we say that, something solemn, big and important. But actually all we know of it is the people we meet in our lifetime. Look at them. Do you know any you'd feel big and solemn about? There's nothing but housewives haggling at pushcarts, drooling brats who write dirty words on the sidewalks, and drunken debutantes. Or their spiritual equivalent. As a matter of fact, one can feel some respect for people when they suffer. They have a certain dignity. But have you ever looked at them when they're enjoying themselves? That's when you see the truth. Look at those who spend the money they've slaved for--at amusement parks and side shows. Look at those who're rich and have the whole world open to them. Observe what they pick out for enjoyment. Watch them in the smarter speak-easies. That's your mankind in general. I don't want to touch it."

"But hell! That's not the way to look at it. That's not the whole picture. There's some good in the worst of us. There's always a redeeming feature."

"So much the worse. Is it an inspiring sight to see a man commit a heroic gesture, and then learn that he goes to vaudeville shows for relaxation? Or see a man who's painted a magnificent canvas--and learn that he spends his time sleeping with every slut he meets?"

"What do you want? Perfection?"

"--or nothing. So, you see, I take the nothing."

"That doesn't make sense."

"I take the only desire one can really permit oneself. Freedom, Alvah, freedom."

"You call that freedom?"

"To ask nothing. To expect nothing. To depend on nothing."

"What if you found something you wanted?"

"I won't find it. I won't choose to see it. It would be part of that lovely world of yours. I'd have to share it with all the rest of you--and I wouldn't. You know, I never open again any great book I've read and loved. It hurts me to think of the other eyes that have read it and of what they were. Things like that can't be shared. Not with people like that."

"Dominique, it's abnormal to feel so strongly about anything."

"That's the only way I can feel. Or not at all."

"Dominique, my dear," he said, with earnest, sincere concern, "I wish I'd been your father. What kind of a tragedy did you have in your childhood?"

"Why, none at all. I had a wonderful childhood. Free and peaceful and not bothered too much by anybody. Well, yes, I did feel bored very often. But I'm used to that."

"I suppose you're just an unfortunate product of our times. That's what I've always said. We're too cynical, too decadent. If we went back in all humility to the simple virtues..."

"Alvah, how can you start on that stuff? That's only for your editorials and..." She stopped, seeing his eyes; they looked puzzled and a little hurt. Then she laughed. "I'm wrong. You really do believe all that. If it's actually believing, or whatever it is you do that takes its place. Oh, Alvah! That's why I love you. That's why I'm doing again right now what I did tonight at the meeting."

"What?" he asked, bewildered.

"Talking as I am talking--to you as you are. It's nice, talking to you about such things. Do you know, Alvah, that primitive people made statues of their gods in man's likeness? Just think of what a statue of you would look like--of you nude, your stomach and all."

"Now what's that in relation to?"

"To nothing at all, darling. Forgive me." She added: "You know, I love statues of naked men. Don't look so silly. I said statues. I had one in particular. It was supposed to be Helios. I got it out of a museum in Europe. I had a terrible time getting it--it wasn't for sale, of course. I think I was in love with it, Alvah. I brought it home with me."

"Where is it? I'd like to see something you like, for a change."

"It's broken."

"Broken? A museum piece? How did that happen?"

"I broke it."

"How?"

"I threw it down the air shaft. There's a concrete floor below."

"Are you totally crazy? Why?"

"So that no one else would ever see it."

"Dominique!"

She jerked her head, as if to shake off the subject; the straight mass of her hair stirred in a heavy ripple, like a wave through a half-liquid pool of mercury. She said:

"I'm sorry, darling. I didn't want to shock you. I thought I could speak to you because you're the one person who's impervious to any sort of shock. I shouldn't have. It's no use, I guess."

She jumped lightly off the table.

"Run on home, Alvah," she said. "It's getting late. I'm tired. See you tomorrow."

#

Guy Francon read his daughter's articles; he heard of the remarks she had made at the reception and at the meeting of social workers. He understood nothing of it, but he understood that it had been precisely the sequence of events to expect from his daughter. It preyed on his mind, with the bewildered feeling of apprehension which the thought of her always brought him. He asked himself whether he actually hated his daughter.

But one picture came back to his mind, irrelevantly, whenever he asked himself that question. It was a picture of her childhood, of a day from some forgotten summer on his country estate in Connecticut long ago. He had forgotten the rest of that day and what had led to the one moment he remembered. But he remembered how he stood on the terrace and saw her leaping over a high green hedge at the end of the lawn. The hedge seemed too high for her little body; he had time to think that she could not make it, in the very moment when he saw her flying triumphantly over the green barrier. He could not remember the beginning nor the end of that leap; but he still saw, clearly and sharply, as on a square of movie film cut out and held motionless forever, the one instant when her body hung in space, her long legs flung wide, her thin arms thrown up, hands braced against the air, her white dress and blond hair spread in two broad, flat mats on the wind, a single moment, the flash of a small body in the greatest burst of ecstatic freedom he had ever witnessed in his life.

He did not know why that moment remained with him, what significance, unheeded at the time, had preserved it for him when so much else of greater import had been lost. He did not know why he had to see that moment again whenever he felt bitterness for his daughter, nor why, seeing it, he felt that unbearable twinge of tenderness. He told himself merely that his paternal affection was asserting itself quite against his will. But in an awkward, unthinking way he wanted to help her, not knowing, not wanting to know what she had to be helped against.

So he began to look more frequently at Peter Keating. He began to accept the solution which he never quite admitted to himself. He found comfort in the person of Peter Keating, and he felt that Keating's simple, stable wholesomeness was just the support needed by the unhealthy inconstancy of his daughter.

Keating would not admit that he had tried to see Dominique again, persistently

and without results. He had obtained her telephone number from Francon long ago, and he had called her often. She had answered, and laughed gaily, and told him that of course she'd see him, she knew she wouldn't be able to escape it, but she was so busy for weeks to come and would he give her a ring by the first of next month?

Francon guessed it. He told Keating he would ask Dominique to lunch and bring them together again. "That is," he added, "I'll try to ask her. She'll refuse, of course." Dominique surprised him again: she accepted, promptly and cheerfully.

She met them at a restaurant, and she smiled as if this were a reunion she welcomed. She talked gaily, and Keating felt enchanted, at ease, wondering why he had ever feared her. At the end of a half hour she looked at Francon and said:

"It was wonderful of you to take time off to see me, Father. Particularly when you're so busy and have so many appointments."

Francon's face assumed a look of consternation. "My God, Dominique, that reminds me!"

"You have an appointment you forgot?" she asked gently. "Confound it, yes! It slipped my mind entirely. Old Andrew Colson phoned this morning and I forgot to make a note of it and he insisted on seeing me at two o'clock, you know how it is, I just simply can't refuse to see Andrew Colson, confound it!--today of all..." He added, suspiciously: "How did you know it?"

"Why, I didn't know it at all. It's perfectly all right, Father. Mr. Keating and I will excuse you, and we'll have a lovely luncheon together, and I have no appointments at all for the day, so you don't have to be afraid that I'll escape from him."

Francon wondered whether she knew that that had been the excuse he'd prepared in advance in order to leave her alone with Keating. He could not be sure. She was looking straight at him; her eyes seemed just a bit too candid. He was glad to escape.

Dominique turned to Keating with a glance so gentle that it could mean nothing but contempt.

"Now let's relax," she said. "We both know what Father is after, so it's perfectly all right. Don't let it embarrass you. It doesn't embarrass me. It's nice that you've got Father on a leash. But I know it's not helpful to you to have him pulling ahead of the leash. So let's forget it and eat our lunch."

He wanted to rise and walk out; and knew, in furious helplessness, that he wouldn't. She said:

"Don't frown, Peter. You might as well call me Dominique, because we'll come to that anyway, sooner or later. I'll probably see a great deal of you, I see so many people, and if it will please Father to have you as one of them--why not?"

For the rest of the luncheon she spoke to him as to an old friend, gaily and openly; with a disquieting candor which seemed to show that there was nothing to conceal, but showed that it was best to attempt no probe. The exquisite kindness of her manner suggested that their relationship was of no possible consequence, that she could not pay him the tribute of hostility. He knew that he disliked her violently. But he watched the shape of her mouth, the movements

of her lips framing words; he watched the way she crossed her legs, a gesture smooth and exact, like an expensive instrument being folded; and he could not escape the feeling of incredulous admiration he had experienced when he had seen her for the first time. When they were leaving, she said:

"Will you take me to the theater tonight, Peter? I don't care what play, any one of them. Call for me after dinner. Tell Father about it. It will please him."

"Though, of course, he should know better than to be pleased," said Keating, "and so should I, but I'll be delighted just the same, Dominique."

"Why should you know better?"

"Because you have no desire to go to a theater or to see me tonight."

"None whatever. I'm beginning to like you, Peter. Call for me at half past eight."

When Keating returned to the office, Francon called him upstairs at once.

"Well?" Francon asked anxiously.

"What's the matter, Guy?" said Keating, his voice innocent. "Why are you so concerned?"

"Well, I...I'm just...frankly, I'm interested to see whether you two could get together at all. I think you'd be a good influence for her. What happened?"

"Nothing at all. We had a lovely time. You know your restaurants--the food was wonderful...Oh, yes, I'm taking your daughter to a show tonight."

"No!"

"Why, yes."

"How did you ever manage that?"

Keating shrugged. "I told you one mustn't be afraid of Dominique."

"I'm not afraid, but...Oh, is it 'Dominique' already? My congratulations, Peter....I'm not afraid, it's only that I can't figure her out. No one can approach her. She's never had a single girl friend, not even in kindergarten. There's always a mob around her, but never a friend. I don't know what to think. There she is now, living all alone, always with a crowd of men around and..."

"Now, Guy, you mustn't think anything dishonorable about your own daughter."

"I don't! That's just the trouble--that I don't. I wish I could. But she's twenty-four, Peter, and she's a virgin--I know, I'm sure of it. Can't you tell just by looking at a woman? I'm no moralist, Peter, and I think that's abnormal. It's unnatural at her age, with her looks, with the kind of utterly unrestricted existence that she leads. I wish to God she'd get married. I honestly do....Well, now, don't repeat that, of course, and don't misinterpret it, I didn't mean it as an invitation."

"Of course not."

"By the way, Peter, the hospital called while you were out. They said poor Lucius is much better. They think he'll pull through." Lucius N. Heyer had had a

stroke, and Keating had exhibited a great deal of concern for his progress, but had not gone to visit him at the hospital.

"I'm so glad," said Keating.

"But I don't think he'll ever be able to come back to work. He's getting old, Peter....Yes, he's getting old....One reaches an age when one can't be burdened with business any longer." He let a paper knife hang between two fingers and tapped it pensively against the edge of a desk calendar. "It happens to all of us, Peter, sooner or later....One must look ahead...."

#

Keating sat on the floor by the imitation logs in the fireplace of his living room, his hands clasped about his knees, and listened to his mother's questions on what did Dominique look like, what did she wear, what had she said to him and how much money did he suppose her mother had actually left her.

He was meeting Dominique frequently now. He had just returned from an evening spent with her on a round of night clubs. She always accepted his invitations. He wondered whether her attitude was a deliberate proof that she could ignore him more completely by seeing him often than by refusing to see him. But each time he met her, he planned eagerly for the next meeting. He had not seen Catherine for a month. She was busy with research work which her uncle had entrusted to her, in preparation for a series of his lectures.

Mrs. Keating sat under a lamp, mending a slight tear in the lining of Peter's dinner jacket, reproaching him, between questions, for sitting on the floor in his dress trousers and best formal shirt. He paid no attention to the reproaches or the questions. But under his bored annoyance he felt an odd sense of relief; as if the stubborn stream of her words were pushing him on and justifying him. He answered once in a while: "Yes....No....I don't know....Oh, yes, she's lovely. She's very lovely....It's awfully late, Mother. I'm tired. I think I'll go to bed...." The doorbell rang.

"Well," said Mrs. Keating. "What can that be, at this hour?" Keating rose, shrugging, and ambled to the door. It was Catherine. She stood, her two hands clasped on a large, old, shapeless pocketbook. She looked determined and hesitant at once. She drew back a little. She said: "Good evening, Peter. Can I come in? I've got to speak to you."

"Katie! Of course! How nice of you! Come right in. Mother, it's Katie."

Mrs. Keating looked at the girl's feet which stepped as if moving on the rolling deck of a ship; she looked at her son, and she knew that something had happened, to be handled with great caution.

"Good evening, Catherine," she said softly.

Keating was conscious of nothing save the sudden stab of joy he had felt on seeing her; the joy told him that nothing had changed, that he was safe in certainty, that her presence resolved all doubts. He forgot to wonder about the lateness of the hour, about her first, uninvited appearance in his apartment.

"Good evening, Mrs. Keating," she said, her voice bright and hollow. "I hope I'm not disturbing you, it's late probably, is it?"

"Why, not at all, child," said Mrs. Keating.

Catherine hurried to speak, senselessly, hanging on to the sound of words:

"I'll just take my hat off....Where can I put it, Mrs. Keating? Here on the table? Would that be all right?...No, maybe I'd better put it on this bureau, though it's a little damp from the street, the hat is, it might hurt the varnish, it's a nice bureau, I hope it doesn't hurt the varnish...."

"What's the matter, Katie?" Keating asked, noticing at last.

She looked at him and he saw that her eyes were terrified. Her lips parted; she was trying to smile. "Katie!" he gasped. She said nothing. "Take your coat off. Come here, get yourself warm by the fire."

He pushed a low bench to the fireplace, he made her sit down. She was wearing a black sweater and an old black skirt, school-girlish house garments which she had not changed for her visit. She sat hunched, her knees drawn tight together. She said, her voice lower and more natural, with the first released sound of pain in it:

"You have such a nice place....So warm and roomy....Can you open the windows any time you want to?"

"Katie darling," he said gently, "what happened?"

"Nothing. It's not that anything really happened. Only I had to speak to you. Now. Tonight."

He looked at Mrs. Keating. "If you'd rather..."

"No. It's perfectly all right. Mrs. Keating can hear it. Maybe it's better if she hears it." She turned to his mother and said very simply: "You see, Mrs. Keating, Peter and I are engaged." She turned to him and added, her voice breaking: "Peter, I want to be married now, tomorrow, as soon as possible."

Mrs. Keating's hand descended slowly to her lap. She looked at Catherine, her eyes expressionless. She said quietly, with a dignity Keating had never expected of her:

"I didn't know it, I am very happy, my dear."

"You don't mind? You really don't mind at all?" Catherine asked desperately.

"Why, child, such things are to be decided only by you and my son."

"Katie!" he gasped, regaining his voice. "What happened? Why as soon as possible?"

"Oh! oh, it did sound as if...as if I were in the kind of trouble girls are supposed to..." She blushed furiously. "Oh, my God! No! It's not that! You know it couldn't be! Oh, you couldn't think, Peter, that I...that..."

"No, of course not," he laughed, sitting down on the floor by her side, slipping an arm around her. "But pull yourself together. What is it? You know I'd marry you tonight if you wanted me to. Only what happened?"

"Nothing. I'm all right now. I'll tell you. You'll think I'm crazy. I just suddenly had the feeling that I'd never marry you, that something dreadful was happening to me and I had to escape from it."

"What was happening to you?"

"I don't know. Not a thing. I was working on my research notes all day, and nothing had happened at all. No calls or visitors. And then suddenly tonight, I had that feeling, it was like a nightmare, you know, the kind of horror that you can't describe, that's not like anything normal at all. Just the feeling that I was in mortal danger, that something was closing in on me, that I'd never escape it, because it wouldn't let me and it was too late."

"That you'd never escape what?"

"I don't know exactly. Everything. My whole life. You know, like quicksand. Smooth and natural. With not a thing that you can notice about it or suspect. And you walk on it easily. When you've noticed, it's too late....And I felt that it would get me, that I'd never marry you, that I had to run, now, now or never. Haven't you ever had a feeling like that, just fear that you couldn't explain?"

"Yes," he whispered.

"You don't think I'm crazy?"

"No, Katie. Only what was it exactly that started it? Anything in particular?"

"Well...it seems so silly now." She giggled apologetically. "It was like this: I was sitting in my room and it was a little chilly, so I didn't open the window. I had so many papers and books on the table, I hardly had room to write and every time I made a note my elbow'd push something off. There were piles of things on the floor all around me, all paper, and it rustled a little, because I had the door to the living room half open and there was a little draft, I guess. Uncle was working too, in the living room. I was getting along fine, I'd been at it for hours, didn't even know what time it was. And then suddenly it got me. I don't know why. Maybe the room was stuffy, or maybe it was the silence, I couldn't hear a thing, not a sound in the living room, and there was that paper rustling, so softly, like somebody being choked to death. And then I looked around and...and I couldn't see Uncle in the living room, but I saw his shadow on the wall, a huge shadow, all hunched, and it didn't move, only it was so huge!"

She shuddered. The thing did not seem silly to her any longer. She whispered:

"That's when it got me. It wouldn't move, that shadow, but I thought all that paper was moving, I thought it was rising very slowly off the floor, and it was going to come to my throat and I was going to drown. That's when I screamed. And, Peter, he didn't hear. He didn't hear it! Because the shadow didn't move. Then I seized my hat and coat and I ran. When I was running through the living room, I think he said: 'Why, Catherine, what time is it?--Where are you going?' Something like that, I'm not sure. But I didn't look back and I didn't answer--I couldn't. I was afraid of him. Afraid of Uncle Ellsworth who's never said a harsh word to me in his life!...That was all, Peter. I can't understand it, but I'm afraid. Not so much any more, not here with you, but I'm afraid...." Mrs. Keating spoke, her voice dry and crisp: "Why, it's plain what happened to you, my dear. You worked too hard and overdid it, and you just got a mite hysterical."

"Yes...probably..."

"No," said Keating dully, "no, it wasn't that...." He was thinking of the loud-speaker in the lobby of the strike meeting. Then he added quickly: "Yes, Mother's right. You're killing yourself with work, Katie. That uncle of yours--I'll wring his neck one of these days."

"Oh, but it's not his fault! He doesn't want me to work. He often takes the books away from me and tells me to go to the movies. He's said that himself, that I work too hard. But I like it. I think that every note I make, every little bit of information--it's going to be taught to hundreds of young students, all over the country, and I think it's me who's helping to educate people, just my own little bit in such a big cause--and I feel proud and I don't want to stop. You see? I've really got nothing to complain about. And then...then, like tonight...I don't know what's the matter with me."

"Look, Katie, we'll get the license tomorrow morning and then we'll be married at once, anywhere you wish."

"Let's, Peter," she whispered. "You really don't mind? I have no real reasons, but I want it. I want it so much. Then I'll know that everything's all right. We'll manage. I can get a job if you...if you're not quite ready or..."

"Oh, nonsense. Don't talk about that. We'll manage. It doesn't matter. Only let's get married and everything else will take care of itself."

"Darling, you understand? You do understand?"

"Yes, Katie."

"Now that it's all settled," said Mrs. Keating, "I'll fix you a cup of hot tea, Catherine. You'll need it before you go home." She prepared the tea, and Catherine drank it gratefully and said, smiling:

"I...I've often been afraid that you wouldn't approve, Mrs. Keating."

"Whatever gave you that idea," Mrs. Keating drawled, her voice not in the tone of a question. "Now you run on home like a good girl and get a good night's sleep."

"Mother, couldn't Katie stay here tonight? She could sleep with you."

"Well, now, Peter, don't get hysterical. What would her uncle think?"

"Oh, no, of course not. I'll be perfectly all right, Peter. I'll go home."

"Not if you..."

"I'm not afraid. Not now. I'm fine. You don't think that I'm really scared of Uncle Ellsworth?"

"Well, all right. But don't go yet."

"Now, Peter," said Mrs. Keating, "you don't want her to be running around the streets later than she has to."

"I'll take her home."

"No," said Catherine. "I don't want to be sillier than I am. No, I won't let you."

He kissed her at the door and he said: "I'll come for you at ten o'clock tomorrow morning and we'll go for the license."

"Yes, Peter," she whispered.

He closed the door after her and he stood for a moment, not noticing that he was clenching his fists. Then he walked defiantly back to the living room, and he stopped, his hands in his pockets, facing his mother. He looked at her, his glance a silent demand. Mrs. Keating sat looking at him quietly, without pretending to ignore the glance and without answering it.

Then she asked:

"Do you want to go to bed, Peter?"

He had expected anything but that. He felt a violent impulse to seize the chance, to turn, leave the room and escape. But he had to learn what she thought; he had to justify himself.

"Now, Mother, I'm not going to listen to any objections."

"I've made no objections," said Mrs. Keating.

"Mother, I want you to understand that I love Katie, that nothing can stop me now, and that's that."

"Very well, Peter."

"I don't see what it is that you dislike about her."

"What I like or dislike is of no importance to you any more."

"Oh yes, Mother, of course it is! You know it is. How can you say that?"

"Peter, I have no likes or dislikes as far as I'm concerned. I have no thought for myself at all, because nothing in the world matters to me, except you. It might be old-fashioned, but that's the way I am. I know I shouldn't be, because children don't appreciate it nowadays, but I can't help it."

"Oh, Mother, you know that I appreciate it! You know that I wouldn't want to hurt you."

"You can't hurt me, Peter, except by hurting yourself. And that...that's hard to bear."

"How am I hurting myself?"

"Well, if you won't refuse to listen to me..."

"I've never refused to listen to you!"

"If you do want to hear my opinion, I'll say that this is the funeral of twenty-nine years of my life, of all the hopes I've had for you."

"But why? Why?"

"It's not that I dislike, Catherine, Peter. I like her very much. She's a nice girl--if she doesn't let herself go to pieces often and pick things out of thin air like that. But she's a respectable girl and I'd say she'd make a good wife for anybody. For any nice, plodding, respectable boy. But to think of it for you, Peter! For you!"

"But..."

"You're modest, Peter. You're too modest. That's always been your trouble. You don't appreciate yourself. You think you're just like anybody else."

"I certainly don't! and I won't have anyone think that!"

"Then use your head! Don't you know what's ahead of you? Don't you see how far you've come already and how far you're going? You have a chance to become--well, not the very best, but pretty near the top in the architectural profession, and..."

"Pretty near the top? Is that what you think? If I can't be the very best, if I can't be the one architect of this country in my day--I don't want any damn part of it!"

"Ah, but one doesn't get to that, Peter, by falling down on the job. One doesn't get to be first in anything without the strength to make some sacrifices."

"But..."

"Your life doesn't belong to you, Peter, if you're really aiming high. You can't allow yourself to indulge every whim, as ordinary people can, because with them it doesn't matter anyway. It's not you or me or what we feel. Peter. It's your career. It takes strength to deny yourself in order to win other people's respect."

"You just dislike Katie and you let your own prejudice..."

"Whatever would I dislike about her? Well, of course, I can't say that I approve of a girl who has so little consideration for her man that she'll run to him and upset him over nothing at all, and ask him to chuck his future out the window just because she gets some crazy notion. That shows what help you can expect from a wife like that. But as far as I'm concerned, if you think that I'm worried about myself--well, you're just blind, Peter. Don't you see that for me personally it would be a perfect match? Because I'd have no trouble with Catherine, I could get along with her beautifully, she'd be respectful and obedient to her mother-in-law. While, on the other hand, Miss Francon..."

He winced. He had known that this would come. It was the one subject he had been afraid to hear mentioned.

"Oh yes, Peter," said Mrs. Keating quietly, firmly, "we've got to speak of that. Now, I'm sure I could never manage Miss Francon, and an elegant society girl like that wouldn't even stand for a dowdy, uneducated mother like me. She'd probably edge me out of the house. Oh, yes, Peter. But you see, it's not me that I'm thinking of."

"Mother," he said harshly, "that part of it is pure drivel--about my having a chance with Dominique. That hell-cat--I'm not sure she'd ever look at me."

"You're slipping, Peter. There was a time when you wouldn't have admitted that there was anything you couldn't get."

"But I don't want her, Mother."

"Oh, you don't, don't you? Well, there you are. Isn't that what I've been saying? Look at yourself! There you've got Francon, the best architect in town, just where you want him! He's practically begging you to take a partnership--at your age, over how many other, older men's heads? He's not permitting, he's

asking you to marry his daughter! And you'll walk in tomorrow and you'll present to him the little nobody you've gone and married! Just stop thinking of yourself for a moment and think of others a bit. How do you suppose he'll like that? How will he like it when you show him the little guttersnipe that you've preferred to his daughter?"

"He won't like it," Keating whispered.

"You bet your life he won't! You bet your life he'll kick you right out on the street! He'll find plenty who'll jump at the chance to take your place. How about that Bennett fellow?"

"Oh, no!" Keating gasped so furiously that she knew she had struck right. "Not Bennett!"

"Yes," she said triumphantly. "Bennett! That's what it'll be--Francon & Bennett, while you'll be pounding the pavements looking for a job! But you'll have a wife! Oh, yes, you'll have a wife!"

"Mother, please..." he whispered, so desperately that she could allow herself to go on without restraint.

"This is the kind of a wife you'll have. A clumsy little girl who won't know where to put her hands or feet. A sheepish little thing who'll run and hide from any important person that you'll want to bring to the house. So you think you're so good? Don't kid yourself, Peter Keating! No great man ever got there alone. Don't you shrug it off, how much the right woman's helped the best of them. Your Francon didn't marry a chambermaid, you bet your life he didn't! Just try to see things through other people's eyes for a bit. What will they think of your wife? What will they think of you? You don't make your living building chicken coops for soda jerkers, don't you forget that! You've got to play the game as the big men of this world see it. You've got to live up to them. What will they think of a man who's married to a common little piece of baggage like that? Will they admire you? Will they trust you? Will they respect you?"

"Shut up!" he cried.

But she went on. She spoke for a long time, while he sat, cracking his knuckles savagely, moaning once in a while: "But I love her....I can't, Mother! I can't....I love her...."

She released him when the streets outside were gray with the light of morning. She let him stumble off to his room, to the accompaniment of the last, gentle, weary sounds of her voice:

"At least, Peter, you can do that much. Just a few months. Ask her to wait just a few months. Heyer might die any moment and then, once you're a partner, you can marry her and you might get away with it. She won't mind waiting just that little bit longer, if she loves you....Think it over, Peter....And while you're thinking it over, think just a bit that if you do this now, you'll be breaking your mother's heart. It's not important, but take just a tiny notice of that. Think of yourself for an hour, but give one minute to the thought of others...."

He did not try to sleep. He did not undress, but sat on his bed for hours, and the thing clearest in his mind was the wish to find himself transported a year ahead when everything would have been settled, he did not care how.

He had decided nothing when he rang the doorbell of Catherine's apartment at ten o'clock. He felt dimly that she would take his hand, that she would lead him,

that she would insist--and thus the decision would be made.

Catherine opened the door and smiled, happily and confidently, as if nothing had happened. She led him to her room, where broad shafts of sunlight flooded the columns of books and papers stacked neatly on her desk. The room was clean, orderly, the pile of the rug still striped in bands left by a carpet sweeper. Catherine wore a crisp organdy blouse, with sleeves standing stiffly, cheerfully about her shoulders; little fluffy needles glittered through her hair in the sunlight. He felt a brief wrench of disappointment that no menace met him in her house; a wrench of relief also, and of disappointment.

"I'm ready, Peter," she said. "Get me my coat."

"Did you tell your uncle?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. I told him last night. He was still working when I got back."

"What did he say?"

"Nothing. He just laughed and asked me what I wanted for a wedding present. But he laughed so much!"

"Where is he? Didn't he want to meet me at least?"

"He had to go to his newspaper office. He said he'd have plenty of time to see more than enough of you. But he said it so nicely!"

"Listen, Katie, I...there's one thing I wanted to tell you." He hesitated, not looking at her. His voice was flat. "You see, it's like this: Lucius Heyer, Francon's partner, is very ill and they don't expect him to live. Francon's been hinting quite openly that I'm to take Heyer's place. But Francon has the crazy idea that he wants me to marry his daughter. Now don't misunderstand me, you know there's not a chance, but I can't tell him so. And I thought...I thought that if we waited...for just a few weeks...I'd be set with the firm and then Francon could do nothing to me when I come and tell him that I'm married....But, of course it's up to you." He looked at her and his voice was eager. "If you want to do it now, we'll go at once."

"But, Peter," she said calmly, serene and astonished. "But of course. We'll wait."

He smiled in approval and relief. But he closed his eyes.

"Of course, we'll wait," she said firmly. "I didn't know this and it's very important. There's really no reason to hurry at all."

"You're not afraid that Francon's daughter might get me?"

She laughed. "Oh, Peter! I know you too well."

"But if you'd rather..."

"No, it's much better. You see, to tell you the truth, I thought this morning that it would be better if we waited, but I didn't want to say anything if you had made up your mind. Since you'd rather wait, I'd much rather too, because, you see, we got word this morning that Uncle's invited to repeat this same course of lectures at a terribly important university on the West Coast this summer. I felt horrible about leaving him flat, with the work unfinished. And then I thought also that perhaps we were being foolish, we're both so young. And

Uncle Ellsworth laughed so much. You see, it's really wiser to wait a little."

"Yes. Well, that's fine. But, Katie, if you feel as you did last night..."

"But I don't! I'm so ashamed of myself. I can't imagine what ever happened to me last night. I try to remember it and I can't understand. You know how it is, you feel so silly afterward. Everything's so clear and simple the next day. Did I say a lot of awful nonsense last night?"

"Well, forget it. You're a sensible little girl. We're both sensible. And we'll wait just a while, it won't be long."

"Yes, Peter."

He said suddenly, fiercely:

"Insist on it now, Katie."

And then he laughed stupidly, as if he had not been quite serious.

She smiled gaily in answer. "You see?" she said, spreading her hands out.

"Well..." he muttered. "Well, all right, Katie. We'll wait. It's better, of course. I...I'll run along then. I'll be late at the office." He felt he had to escape her room for the moment, for that day. "I'll give you a ring. Let's have dinner together tomorrow."

"Yes, Peter. That will be nice."

He went away, relieved and desolate, cursing himself for the dull, persistent feeling that told him he had missed a chance which would never return; that something was closing in on them both and they had surrendered. He cursed, because he could not say what it was that they should have fought. He hurried on to his office where he was being late for an appointment with Mrs. Moorehead.

Catherine stood in the middle of the room, after he had left, and wondered why she suddenly felt empty and cold; why she hadn't known until this moment that she had hoped he would force her to follow him. Then she shrugged, and smiled reproachfully at herself, and went back to the work on her desk.

13.

ON A DAY in October, when the Heller house was nearing completion, a lanky young man in overalls stepped out of a small group that stood watching the house from the road and approached Roark.

"You the fellow who built the Booby Hatch?" he asked, quite diffidently.

"If you mean this house, yes," Roark answered.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir. It's only that that's what they call the place around here. It's not what I'd call it. You see, I've got a building job...well, not exactly, but I'm going to build a filling station of my own about ten miles from here, down on the Post Road. I'd like to talk to you."

Later, on a bench in front of the garage where he worked, Jimmy Gowan explained in detail. He added: "And how I happened to think of you, Mr. Roark, is that I

like it, that funny house of yours. Can't say why, but I like it. It makes sense to me. And then again I figured everybody's gaping at it and talking about it, well, that's no use to a house, but that'd be plenty smart for a business, let them giggle, but let them talk about it. So I thought I'd get you to build it, and then they'll all say I'm crazy, but do you care? I don't."

Jimmy Gowan had worked like a mule for fifteen years, saving money for a business of his own. People voiced indignant objections to his choice of architect; Jimmy uttered no word of explanation or self-defense; he said politely: "Maybe so, folks, maybe so," and proceeded to have Roark build his station.

The station opened on a day in late December. It stood on the edge of the Boston Post Road, two small structures of glass and concrete forming a semicircle among the trees: the cylinder of the office and the long, low oval of the diner, with the gasoline pumps as the colonnade of a forecourt between them. It was a study in circles; there were no angles and no straight lines; it looked like shapes caught in a flow, held still at the moment of being poured, at the precise moment when they formed a harmony that seemed too perfect to be intentional. It looked like a cluster of bubbles hanging low over the ground, not quite touching it, to be swept aside in an instant on a wind of speed; it looked gay, with the hard, bracing gaiety of efficiency, like a powerful airplane engine.

Roark stayed at the station on the day of its opening. He drank coffee in a clean, white mug, at the counter of the diner, and he watched the cars stopping at the door. He left late at night. He looked back once, driving down the long, empty road. The lights of the station winked, flowing away from him. There it stood, at the crossing of two roads, and cars would be streaming past it day and night, cars coming from cities in which there was no room for buildings such as this, going to cities in which there would be no buildings such as this. He turned his face to the road before him, and he kept his eyes off the mirror which still held, glittering softly, dots of light that moved away far behind him....

He drove back to months of idleness. He sat in his office each morning, because he knew that he had to sit there, looking at a door that never opened, his fingers forgotten on a telephone that never rang. The ash trays he emptied each day, before leaving, contained nothing but the stubs of his own cigarettes.

"What are you doing about it, Howard?" Austen Heller asked him at dinner one evening.

"Nothing."

"But you must."

"There's nothing I can do."

"You must learn how to handle people."

"I can't."

"Why?"

"I don't know how. I was born without some one particular sense."

"It's something one acquires."

"I have no organ to acquire it with. I don't know whether it's something I lack,

or something extra I have that stops me. Besides, I don't like people who have to be handled."

"But you can't sit still and do nothing now. You've got to go after commissions."

"What can I tell people in order to get commissions? I can only show my work. If they don't hear that, they won't hear anything I say. I'm nothing to them, but my work--my work is all we have in common. And I have no desire to tell them anything else."

"Then what are you going to do? You're not worried?"

"No. I expected it. I'm waiting."

"For what?"

"My kind of people."

"What kind is that?"

"I don't know. Yes, I do know, but I can't explain it. I've often wished I could. There must be some one principle to cover it, but I don't know what it is."

"Honesty?"

"Yes...no, only partly. Guy Francon is an honest man, but it isn't that. Courage? Ralston Holcombe has courage, in his own manner....I don't know. I'm not that vague on other things. But I can tell my kind of people by their faces. By something in their faces. There will be thousands passing by your house and by the gas station. If out of those thousands, one stops and sees it--that's all I need."

"Then you do need other people, after all, don't you, Howard?"

"Of course. What are you laughing at?"

"I've always thought that you were the most anti-social animal I've ever had the pleasure of meeting."

"I need people to give me work. I'm not building mausoleums. Do you suppose I should need them in some other way? In a closer, more personal way?"

"You don't need anyone in a very personal way."

"No."

"You're not even boasting about it."

"Should I?"

You can't. You're too arrogant to boast."

"Is that what I am?"

"Don't you know what you are?"

"No. Not as far as you're seeing me, or anyone else."

Heller sat silently, his wrist describing circles with a cigarette. Then Heller laughed, and said:

"That was typical."

"What?"

"That you didn't ask me to tell you what you are as I see you. Anybody else would have."

"I'm sorry. It wasn't indifference. You're one of the few friends I want to keep. I just didn't think of asking."

"I know you didn't. That's the point. You're a self-centered monster, Howard. The more monstrous because you're utterly innocent about it."

"That's true."

"You should show a little concern when you admit that."

"Why?"

"You know, there's a thing that stumps me. You're the coldest man I know. And I can't understand why--knowing that you're actually a fiend in your quiet sort of way--why I always feel, when I see you, that you're the most life-giving person I've ever met."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't know. Just that."

The weeks went by, and Roark walked to his office each day, sat at his desk for eight hours, and read a great deal. At five o'clock, he walked home. He had moved to a better room, near the office; he spent little; he had enough money for a long time to come.

On a morning in February the telephone rang in his office. A brisk, emphatic feminine voice asked for an appointment with Mr. Roark, the architect. That afternoon, a brisk, small, dark-skinned woman entered the office; she wore a mink coat and exotic earrings that tinkled when she moved her head. She moved her head a great deal, in sharp little birdlike jerks. She was Mrs. Wayne Wilmot of Long Island and she wished to build a country house. She had selected Mr. Roark to build it, she explained, because he had designed the home of Austen Heller. She adored Austen Heller; he was, she stated, an oracle to all those pretending just the tiniest bit to the title of progressive intellectual, she thought--"don't you?"--and she followed Heller like a zealot, "yes, literally, like a zealot." Mr. Roark was very young, wasn't he?--but she didn't mind that, she was very liberal and glad to help youth. She wanted a large house, she had two children, she believed in expressing their individuality--"don't you?"--and each had to have a separate nursery, she had to have a library--"I read to distraction"--a music room, a conservatory--"we grow lilies-of-the-valley, my friends tell me it's my flower"--a den for her husband, who trusted her implicitly and let her plan the house--"because I'm so good at it, if I weren't a woman I'm sure I'd be an architect"--servants' rooms and all that, and a three-car garage. After an hour and a half of details and explanations, she said:

"And of course, as to the style of the house, it will be English Tudor. I adore

English Tudor."

He looked at her. He asked slowly:

"Have you seen Austen Heller's house?"

"No, though I did want to see it, but how could I?--I've never met Mr. Heller, I'm only his fan, just that, a plain, ordinary fan, what is he like in person?--you must tell me, I'm dying to hear it--no, I haven't seen his house, it's somewhere up in Maine, isn't it?"

Roark took photographs out of the desk drawer and handed them to her.

"This," he said, "is the Heller house."

She looked at the photographs, her glance like water skimming off their glossy surfaces, and threw them down on the desk.

"Very interesting," she said. "Most unusual. Quite stunning. But, of course, that's not what I want. That kind of a house wouldn't express my personality. My friends tell me I have the Elizabethan personality."

Quietly, patiently, he tried to explain to her why she should not build a Tudor house. She interrupted him in the middle of a sentence.

"Look here, Mr. Roark, you're not trying to teach me something, are you? I'm quite sure that I have good taste, and I know a great deal about architecture, I've taken a special course at the club. My friends tell me that I know more than many architects. I've quite made up my mind that I shall have an English Tudor house. I do not care to argue about it."

"You'll have to go to some other architect, Mrs. Wilmot."

She stared at him incredulously.

"You mean, you're refusing the commission?"

"Yes."

"You don't want my commission?"

"No."

"But why?"

"I don't do this sort of thing."

"But I thought architects..."

"Yes. Architects will build you anything you ask for. Any other architect in town will."

"But I gave you first chance."

"Will you do me a favor, Mrs. Wilmot? Will you tell me why you came to me if all you wanted was a Tudor house?"

"Well, I certainly thought you'd appreciate the opportunity. And then, I thought I could tell my friends that I had Austen Heller's architect."

He tried to explain and to convince. He knew, while he spoke, that it was useless, because his words sounded as if they were hitting a vacuum. There was no such person as Mrs. Wayne Wilmot; there was only a shell containing the opinions of her friends, the picture post cards she had seen, the novels of country squires she had read; it was this that he had to address, this immateriality which could not hear him or answer, deaf and impersonal like a wad of cotton.

"I'm sorry," said Mrs. Wayne Wilmot, "but I'm not accustomed to dealing with a person utterly incapable of reason. I'm quite sure I shall find plenty of bigger men who'll be glad to work for me. My husband was opposed to my idea of having you, in the first place, and I'm sorry to see that he was right. Good day, Mr. Roark."

She walked out with dignity, but she slammed the door. He slipped the photographs back into the drawer of his desk.

Mr. Robert L. Mundy, who came to Roark's office in March, had been sent by Austin Heller. Mr. Mundy's voice and hair were gray as steel, but his eyes were blue, gentle and wistful. He wanted to build a house in Connecticut, and he spoke of it tremulously, like a young bridegroom and like a man groping for his last, secret goal.

"It's not just a house, Mr. Roark," he said with timid diffidence, as if he were speaking to a man older and more prominent than himself, "it's like...like a symbol to me. It's what I've been waiting and working for all these years. It's so many years now....I must tell you this, so you'll understand. I have a great deal of money now, more than I care to think about. I didn't always have it. Maybe it came too late. I don't know. Young people think that you forget what happens on the way when you get there. But you don't. Something stays. I'll always remember how I was a boy--in a little place down in Georgia, that was--and how I ran errands for the harness maker, and the kids laughed when carriages drove by and splashed mud all over my pants. That's how long ago I decided that some day I'd have a house of my own, the kind of house that carriages stop before. After that, no matter how hard it got to be at times, I'd always think of that house, and it helped. Afterward, there were years when I was afraid of it--I could have built it, but I was afraid. Well, now the time has come. Do you understand, Mr. Roark? Austen said you'd be just the man who'd understand."

"Yes," said Roark eagerly, "I do."

"There was a place," said Mr. Mundy, "down there, near my home town. The mansion of the whole county. The Randolph place. An old plantation house, as they don't build them any more. I used to deliver things there sometimes, at the back door. That's the house I want, Mr. Roark. Just like it. But not back there in Georgia. I don't want to go back. Right here, near the city. I've bought the land. You must help me to have it landscaped just like the Randolph place. We'll plant trees and shrubs, the kind they have in Georgia, the flowers and everything. We'll find a way to make them grow. I don't care how much it costs. Of course, we'll have electric lights and garages now, not carriages. But I want the electric lights made like candles and I want the garages to look like the stables. Everything, just as it was. I have photographs of the Randolph place. And I've bought some of their old furniture."

When Roark began to speak Mr. Mundy listened, in polite astonishment. He did not seem to resent the words. They did not penetrate.

"Don't you see?" Roark was saying. "It's a monument you want to build, but not to yourself. Not to your own life or your own achievement. To other people. To their supremacy over you. You're not challenging that supremacy. You're immortalizing it. You haven't thrown it off--you're putting it up forever. Will you be happy if you seal yourself for the rest of your life in that borrowed shape? Or if you strike free, for once, and build a new house, your own? You don't want the Randolph place. You want what it stood for. But what it stood for is what you've fought all your life."

Mr. Mundy listened blankly. And Roark felt again a bewildered helplessness before unreality: there was no such person as Mr. Mundy; there were only the remnants, long dead, of the people who had inhabited the Randolph place; one could not plead with remnants or convince them.

"No," said Mr. Mundy, at last. "No. You may be right, but that's not what I want at all. I don't say you haven't got your reasons, and they sound like good reasons, but I like the Randolph place."

"Why?"

"Just because I like it. Just because that's what I like."

When Roark told him that he would have to select another architect, Mr. Mundy said unexpectedly:

"But I like you. Why can't you build it for me? What difference would it make to you?"

Roark did not explain.

Later, Austen Heller said to him: "I expected it. I was afraid you'd turn him down. I'm not blaming you, Howard. Only he's so rich. It could have helped you so much. And, after all, you've got to live."

"Not that way," said Roark.

#

In April Mr. Nathaniel Janss, of the Janss-Stuart Real Estate Company, called Roark to his office. Mr. Janss was frank and blunt. He stated that his company was planning the erection of a small office building--thirty stories--on lower Broadway, and that he was not sold on Roark as the architect, in fact he was more or less opposed to him, but his friend Austen Heller had insisted that he should meet Roark and talk to him about it; Mr. Janss did not think very much of Roark's stuff, but Heller had simply bullied him and he would listen to Roark before deciding on anyone, and what did Roark have to say on the subject?

Roark had a great deal to say. He said it calmly, and this was difficult, at first, because he wanted that building, because what he felt was the desire to wrench that building out of Mr. Janss at the point of a gun, if he'd had one. But after a few minutes, it became simple and easy, the thought of the gun vanished, and even his desire for the building; it was not a commission to get and he was not there to get it; he was only speaking of buildings.

"Mr. Janss, when you buy an automobile, you don't want it to have rose garlands about the windows, a lion on each fender and an angel sitting on the roof. Why don't you?"

"That would be silly," stated Mr. Janss.

"Why would it be silly? Now I think it would be beautiful. Besides, Louis the Fourteenth had a carriage like that and what was good enough for Louis is good enough for us. We shouldn't go in for rash innovations and we shouldn't break with tradition."

"Now you know damn well you don't believe anything of the sort!"

"I know I don't. But that's what you believe, isn't it? Now take a human body. Why wouldn't you like to see a human body with a curling tail with a crest of ostrich feathers at the end? And with ears shaped like acanthus leaves? It would be ornamental, you know, instead of the stark, bare ugliness we have now. Well, why don't you like the idea? Because it would be useless and pointless. Because the beauty of the human body is that it hasn't a single muscle which doesn't serve its purpose; that there's not a line wasted; that every detail of it fits one idea, the idea of a man and the life of a man. Will you tell me why, when it comes to a building, you don't want it to look as if it had any sense or purpose, you want to choke it with trimmings, you want to sacrifice its purpose to its envelope--not knowing even why you want that kind of an envelope? You want it to look like a hybrid beast produced by crossing the bastards of ten different species until you get a creature without guts, without heart or brain, a creature all pelt, tail, claws and feathers? Why? You must tell me, because I've never been able to understand it."

"Well," said Mr. Janss, "I've never thought of it that way." He added, without great conviction: "But we want our building to have dignity, you know, and beauty, what they call real beauty."

"What who calls what beauty?"

"Well-I-I..."

"Tell me, Mr. Janss, do you really think that Greek columns and fruit baskets are beautiful on a modern, steel office building?"

"I don't know that I've ever thought anything about why a building was beautiful, one way or another," Mr. Janss confessed, "but I guess that's what the public wants."

"Why do you suppose they want it?"

"I don't know."

"Then why should you care what they want?"

"You've got to consider the public."

"Don't you know that most people take most things because that's what's given them, and they have no opinion whatever? Do you wish to be guided by what they expect you to think they think or by your own judgment?"

"You can't force it down their throats."

"You don't have to. You must only be patient. Because on your side you have reason--oh, I know, it's something no one really wants to have on his side--and against you, you have just a vague, fat, blind inertia."

"Why do you think that I don't want reason on my side?"

"It's not you, Mr. Janss. It's the way most people feel. They have to take a

chance, everything they do is taking a chance, but they feel so much safer when they take it on something they know to be ugly, vain and stupid."

"That's true, you know," said Mr. Janss.

At the conclusion of the interview, Mr. Janss said thoughtfully: "I can't say that it doesn't make sense, Mr. Roark. Let me think it over. You'll hear from me shortly."

Mr. Janss called him a week later. "It's the board of directors that will have to decide. Are you willing to try, Roark? Draw up the plans and some preliminary sketches. I'll submit them to the board. I can't promise anything. But I'm for you and I'll fight them on it."

Roark worked on the plans for two weeks of days and nights. The plans were submitted. Then he was called before the board of directors of the Janss-Stuart Real Estate Company. He stood at the side of a long table and he spoke, his eyes moving slowly from face to face. He tried not to look down at the table, but on the lower rim of his vision there remained the white spot of his drawings spread before the twelve men. He was asked a great many questions. Mr. Janss jumped up at times to answer instead, to pound the table with his fist, to snarl: "Don't you see? Isn't it clear?...What of it, Mr. Grant? What if no one has ever built anything like it?...Gothic, Mr. Hubbard? Why must we have Gothic?...I've a jolly good mind to resign if you turn this down!"

Roark spoke quietly. He was the only man in the room who felt certain of his own words. He felt also that he had no hope. The twelve faces before him had a variety of countenances, but there was something, neither color nor feature, upon all of them, as a common denominator, something that dissolved their expressions, so that they were not faces any longer but only empty ovals of flesh. He was addressing everyone. He was addressing no one. He felt no answer, not even the echo of his own words striking against the membrane of an eardrum. His words were falling down a well, hitting stone salients on their way, and each salient refused to stop them, threw them farther, tossed them from one another, sent them to seek a bottom that did not exist.

He was told that he would be informed of the board's decision. He knew that decision in advance. When he received the letter, he read it without feeling. The letter was from Mr. Janss and it began: "Dear Mr. Roark, I am sorry to inform you that our board of directors find themselves unable to grant you the commission for..." There was a plea in the letter's brutal, offensive formality: the plea of a man who could not face him.

#

John Fargo had started in life as a pushcart peddler. At fifty he owned a modest fortune and a prosperous department store on lower Sixth Avenue. For years he had fought successfully against a large store across the street, one of many inherited by a numerous family. In the fall of last year the family had moved that particular branch to new quarters, farther uptown. They were convinced that the center of the city's retail business was shifting north and they had decided to hasten the downfall of their former neighborhood by leaving their old store vacant, a grim reminder and embarrassment to their competitor across the street. John Fargo had answered by announcing that he would build a new store of his own, on the very same spot, next door to his old one; a store newer and smarter than any the city had seen; he would, he declared, keep the prestige of his old neighborhood.

When he called Roark to his office he did not say that he would have to decide later or think things over. He said: "You're the architect." He sat, his feet on

his desk, smoking a pipe, snapping out words and puffs of smoke together. "I'll tell you what space I need and how much I want to spend. If you need more--say so. The rest is up to you. I don't know much about buildings. But I know a man who knows when I see him. Go ahead."

Fargo had chosen Roark because Fargo had driven, one day, past Gowan's Service Station, and stopped, and gone in, and asked a few questions. After that, he bribed Heller's cook to show him through the house in Heller's absence. Fargo needed no further argument.

#

Late in May, when the drafting table in Roark's office was buried deep in sketches for the Fargo store, he received another commission.

Mr. Whitford Sanborn, the client, owned an office building that had been built for him many years ago by Henry Cameron. When Mr. Sanborn decided that he needed a new country residence he rejected his wife's suggestions of other architects; he wrote to Henry Cameron. Cameron wrote a ten-page letter in answer; the first three lines of the letter stated that he had retired from practice; the rest of it was about Howard Roark. Roark never learned what had been said in that letter; Sanborn would not show it to him and Cameron would not tell him. But Sanborn signed him to build the country residence, in spite of Mrs. Sanborn's violent objections.

Mrs. Sanborn was the president of many charity organizations and this had given her an addiction to autocracy such as no other avocation could develop. Mrs. Sanborn wished a French chateau built upon their new estate on the Hudson. She wished it to look stately and ancient, as if it had always belonged to the family; of course, she admitted, people would know that it hadn't, but it would appear as if it had.

Mr. Sanborn signed the contract after Roark had explained to him in detail the kind of a house he was to expect; Mr. Sanborn had agreed to it readily, had not wished even to wait for sketches. "But of course, Fanny," Mr. Sanborn said wearily, "I want a modern house. I told you that long ago. That's what Cameron would have designed."

"What in heaven's name does Cameron mean now?" she asked. "I don't know, Fanny. I know only that there's no building in New York like the one he did for me."

The arguments continued for many long evenings in the dark, cluttered, polished mahogany splendor of the Sanborns' Victorian drawing room. Mr. Sanborn wavered. Roark asked, his arm sweeping out at the room around them: "Is this what you want?"

"Well, if you're going to be impertinent..." Mrs. Sanborn began, but Mr. Sanborn exploded: "Christ, Fanny! He's right! That's just what I don't want! That's just what I'm sick of!"

Roark saw no one until his sketches were ready. The house--of plain fieldstone, with great windows and many terraces--stood in the gardens over the river, as spacious as the spread of water, as open as the gardens, and one had to follow its lines attentively to find the exact steps by which it was tied to the sweep of the gardens, so gradual was the rise of the terraces, the approach to and the full reality of the walls; it seemed only that the trees flowed into the house and through it; it seemed that the house was not a barrier against the sunlight, but a bowl to gather it, to concentrate it into brighter radiance than that of the air outside.

Mr. Sanborn was first to see the sketches. He studied them, and then he said: "I...I don't know quite how to say it, Mr. Roark. It's great. Cameron was right about you."

After others had seen the sketches Mr. Sanborn was not certain of this any longer. Mrs. Sanborn said that the house was awful. And the long evening arguments were resumed. "Now why, why can't we add turrets there, on the corners?" Mrs. Sanborn asked. "There's plenty of room on those flat roofs." When she had been talked out of the turrets, she inquired: "Why can't we have mullioned windows? What difference would that make? God knows, the windows are large enough--though why they have to be so large I fail to see, it gives one no privacy at all--but I'm willing to accept your windows, Mr. Roark, if you're so stubborn about it, but why can't you put mullions on the panes? It will soften things, and it gives a regal air, you know, a feudal sort of mood."

The friends and relatives to whom Mrs. Sanborn hurried with the sketches did not like the house at all. Mrs. Walling called it preposterous, and Mrs. Hooper--crude. Mr. Melander said he wouldn't have it as a present. Mrs. Applebee stated that it looked like a shoe factory. Miss Davitt glanced at the sketches and said with approval: "Oh, how very artistic, my dear! Who designed it?...Roark?...Roark?...Never heard of him....Well, frankly, Fanny, it looks like something phony."

The two children of the family were divided on the question. June Sanborn, aged nineteen, had always thought that all architects were romantic, and she had been delighted to learn that they would have a very young architect; but she did not like Roark's appearance and his indifference to her hints, so she declared that the house was hideous and she, for one, would refuse to live in it. Richard Sanborn, aged twenty-four, who had been a brilliant student in college and was now slowly drinking himself to death, startled his family by emerging from his usual lethargy and declaring that the house was magnificent. No one could tell whether it was esthetic appreciation or hatred of his mother or both.

Whitford Sanborn swayed with every new current. He would mutter: "Well, now, not mullions, of course, that's utter rubbish, but couldn't you give her a cornice, Mr. Roark, to keep peace in the family? Just a kind of a crenelated cornice, it wouldn't spoil anything. Or would it?"

The arguments ended when Roark declared that he would not build the house unless Mr. Sanborn approved the sketches just as they were and signed his approval on every sheet of the drawings. Mr. Sanborn signed.

Mrs. Sanborn was pleased to learn, shortly afterward, that no reputable contractor would undertake the erection of the house. "You see?" she stated triumphantly. Mr. Sanborn refused to see. He found an obscure firm that accepted the commission, grudgingly and as a special favor to him. Mrs. Sanborn learned that she had an ally in the contractor, and she broke social precedent to the extent of inviting him for tea. She had long since lost all coherent ideas about the house; she merely hated Roark. Her contractor hated all architects on principle.

The construction of the Sanborn house proceeded through the months of summer and fall, each day bringing new battles. "But, of course, Mr. Roark, I told you I wanted three closets in my bedroom, I remember distinctly, it was on a Friday and we were sitting in the drawing room and Mr. Sanborn was sitting in the big chair by the window and I was...What about the plans? What plans? How do you expect me to understand plans?"

"Aunt Rosalie says she can't possibly climb a circular stairway, Mr. Roark. What

are we going to do? Select our guests to fit your house?"

"Mr. Hulburt says that kind of ceiling won't hold....Oh yes, Mr. Hulburt knows a lot about architecture. He's spent two summers in Venice."

"June, poor darling, says her room will be dark as a cellar....Well, that's the way she feels, Mr. Roark. Even if it isn't dark, but if it makes her feel dark, it's the same thing." Roark stayed up nights, redrafting the plans for the alterations which he could not avoid. It meant days of tearing down floors, stairways, partitions already erected; it meant extras piling up on the contractor's budget. The contractor shrugged and said: "I told you so. That's what always happens when you get one of those fancy architects. You wait and see what this thing will cost you before he gets through."

Then, as the house took shape, it was Roark who found that he wanted to make a change. The eastern wing had never quite satisfied him. Watching it rise, he saw the mistake he had made and the way to correct it; he knew it would bring the house into a more logical whole. He was making his first steps in building and they were his first experiments. He could admit it openly. But Mr. Sanborn refused to allow the change; it was his turn. Roark pleaded with him; once the picture of that new wing had become clear in Roark's mind he could not bear to look at the house as it stood. "It's not that I disagree with you," Mr. Sanborn said coldly, "in fact, I do think you're right. But we cannot afford it. Sorry."

"It will cost you less than the senseless changes Mrs. Sanborn has forced me to make."

"Don't bring that up again."

"Mr. Sanborn," Roark asked slowly, "will you sign a paper that you authorize this change provided it costs you nothing?"

"Certainly. If you can conjure up a miracle to work that."

He signed. The eastern wing was rebuilt. Roark paid for it himself. It cost him more than the fee he received. Mr. Sanborn hesitated: he wanted to repay it. Mrs. Sanborn stopped him. "It's just a low trick," she said, "just a form of high-pressure. He's blackmailing you on your better feelings. He expects you to pay. Wait and see. He'll ask for it. Don't let him get away with that." Roark did not ask for it. Mr. Sanborn never paid him.

When the house was completed, Mrs. Sanborn refused to live in it. Mr. Sanborn looked at it wistfully, too tired to admit that he loved it, that he had always wanted a house just like it. He surrendered. The house was not furnished. Mrs. Sanborn took herself, her husband and her daughter off to Florida for the winter, "where," she said, "we have a house that's a decent Spanish, thank God!--because we bought it ready-made. This is what happens when you venture to build for yourself, with some half-baked idiot of an architect!" Her son, to everybody's amazement, exhibited a sudden burst of savage will power: he refused to go to Florida; he liked the new house, he would live nowhere else. So three of the rooms were furnished for him. The family left and he moved alone into the house on the Hudson. At night, one could see from the river a single rectangle of yellow, small and lost, among the windows of the huge, dead house.

The bulletin of the Architects' Guild of America carried a small item:

"A curious incident, which would be amusing if it were not deplorable, is reported to us about a home recently built by Mr. Whitford Sanborn, noted industrialist. Designed by one Howard Roark and erected at a cost of well over

\$100,000, this house was found by the family to be uninhabitable. It stands now, abandoned, as an eloquent witness to professional incompetence."

14.

LUCIUS N. Heyer stubbornly refused to die. He had recovered from the stroke and returned to his office, ignoring the objections of his doctor and the solicitous protests of Guy Francon. Francon offered to buy him out. Heyer refused, his pale, watering eyes staring obstinately at nothing at all. He came to his office every two or three days; he read the copies of correspondence left in his letter basket according to custom; he sat at his desk and drew flowers on a clean pad; then he went home. He walked, dragging his feet slowly; he held his elbows pressed to his sides and his forearms thrust forward, with the fingers half closed, like claws; the fingers shook; he could not use his left hand at all. He would not retire. He liked to see his name on the firm's stationery.

He wondered dimly why he was no longer introduced to prominent clients, why he never saw the sketches of their new buildings, until they were half erected. If he mentioned this, Francon protested: "But, Lucius, I couldn't think of bothering you in your condition. Any other man would have retired, long ago."

Francon puzzled him mildly. Peter Keating baffled him. Keating barely bothered to greet him when they met, and then as an afterthought; Keating walked off in the middle of a sentence addressed to him; when Heyer issued some minor order to one of the draftsmen, it was not carried out and the draftsman informed him that the order had been countermanded by Mr. Keating. Heyer could not understand it; he always remembered Keating as the diffident boy who had talked to him so nicely about old porcelain. He excused Keating at first; then he tried to mollify him, humbly and clumsily; then he conceived an unreasoning fear of Keating. He complained to Francon. He said, petulantly, assuming the tone of an authority he could never have exercised: "That boy of yours, Guy, that Keating fellow, he's getting to be impossible. He's rude to me. You ought to get rid of him."

"Now you see, Lucius," Francon answered dryly, "why I say that you should retire. You're overstraining your nerves and you're beginning to imagine things."

Then came the competition for the Cosmo-Slotnick Building.

Cosmo-Slotnick Pictures of Hollywood, California, had decided to erect a stupendous home office in New York, a skyscraper to house a motion-picture theater and forty floors of offices. A world-wide competition for the selection of the architect had been announced a year in advance. It was stated that Cosmo-Slotnick were not merely the leaders in the art of the motion picture, but embraced all the arts, since all contributed to the creation of the films; and architecture being a lofty, though neglected, branch of esthetics, Cosmo-Slotnick were ready to put it on the map.

With the latest news of the casting of I'll Take a Sailor and the shooting of Wives for Sale, came stories about the Parthenon and the Pantheon. Miss Sally O'Dawn was photographed on the steps of the Rheims Cathedral--in a bathing suit, and Mr. Pratt ("Pardner") Purcell gave an interview, stating that he had always dreamed of being a master builder, if he hadn't been a movie actor. Ralston Holcombe, Guy Francon and Gordon L. Prescott were quoted on the future of American architecture--in an article written by Miss Dimples Williams, and an imaginary interview quoted what Sir Christopher Wren would have said about the

motion picture. In the Sunday supplements there were photographs of Cosmo-Slotnick starlets in shorts and sweaters, holding T-squares and slide-rules, standing before drawing boards that bore the legend: "Cosmo-Slotnick Building" over a huge question mark.

The competition was open to all architects of all countries; the building was to rise on Broadway and to cost ten million dollars; it was to symbolize the genius of modern technology and the spirit of the American people; it was announced in advance as "the most beautiful building in the world." The jury of award consisted of Mr. Shupe, representing Cosmo, Mr. Slotnick, representing Slotnick. Professor Peterkin of the Stanton Institute of Technology, the Mayor of the City of New York, Ralston Holcombe, president of the A.G.A., and Ellsworth M. Toohey.

"Go to it, Peter!" Francon told Keating enthusiastically. "Do your best. Give me all you've got. This is your great chance. You'll be known the world over if you win. And here's what we'll do: we'll put your name on our entry, along with the firm's. If we win, you'll get one fifth of the prize. The grand prize is sixty thousand dollars, you know."

"Heyer will object" said Keating cautiously.

"Let him object. That's why I'm doing it. He might get it through his head what's the decent thing for him to do. And I...well, you know how I feel, Peter. I think of you as my partner already. I owe it to you. You've earned it. This might be your key to it."

Keating redrew his project five times. He hated it. He hated every girder of that building before it was born. He worked, his hand trembling. He did not think of the drawing under his hand. He thought of all the other contestants, of the man who might win and be proclaimed publicly as his superior. He wondered what that other one would do, how the other would solve the problem and surpass him. He had to beat that man; nothing else mattered; there was no Peter Keating, there was only a suction chamber, like the kind of tropical plant he'd heard about, a plant that drew an insect into its vacuum and sucked it dry and thus acquired its own substance.

He felt nothing but immense uncertainty when his sketches were ready and the delicate perspective of a white marble edifice lay, neatly finished, before him. It looked like a Renaissance palace made of rubber and stretched to the height of forty stories. He had chosen the style of the Renaissance because he knew the unwritten law that all architectural juries liked columns, and because he remembered Ralston Holcombe was on the jury. He had borrowed from all of Holcombe's favorite Italian palaces. It looked good...it might be good...he was not sure. He had no one to ask.

He heard these words in his own mind and he felt a wave of blind fury. He felt it before he knew the reason, but he knew the reason almost in the same instant: there was someone whom he could ask. He did not want to think of that name; he would not go to him; the anger rose to his face and he felt the hot, tight patches under his eyes. He knew that he would go.

He pushed the thought out of his mind. He was not going anywhere. When the time came, he slipped his drawings into a folder and went to Roark's office.

He found Roark alone, sitting at the desk in the large room that bore no signs of activity.

"Hello, Howard!" he said brightly. "How are you? I'm not interrupting anything, am I?"

"Hello, Peter," said Roark. "You aren't."

"Not awfully busy, are you?"

"No."

"Mind if I sit down for a few minutes?"

"Sit down."

"Well, Howard, you've been doing great work. I've seen the Fargo Store. It's splendid. My congratulations."

"Thank you."

"You've been forging straight ahead, haven't you? Had three commissions already?"

"Four."

"Oh, yes, of course, four. Pretty good. I hear you've been having a little trouble with the Sanborns."

"I have."

"Well, it's not all smooth sailing, not all of it, you know. No new commissions since? Nothing?"

"No. Nothing."

"Well, it will come. I've always said that architects don't have to cut one another's throat, there's plenty of work for all of us, we must develop a spirit of professional unity and co-operation. For instance, take that competition--have you sent your entry in already?"

"What competition?"

"Why, the competition. The Cosmo-Slotnick competition."

"I'm not sending any entry."

"You're...not? Not at all?"

"No."

"Why?"

"I don't enter competitions."

"Why, for heaven's sake?"

"Come on, Peter. You didn't come here to discuss that."

"As a matter of fact I did think I'd show you my own entry, you understand I'm not asking you to help me, I just want your reaction, just a general opinion."

He hastened to open the folder.

Roark studied the sketches. Keating snapped: "Well? Is it all right?"

"No. It's rotten. And you know it."

Then, for hours, while Keating watched and the sky darkened and lights flared up in the windows of the city, Roark talked, explained, slashed lines through the plans, untangled the labyrinth of the theater's exits out windows, unraveled halls, smashed useless arches, straightened stairways. Keating stammered once: "Jesus, Howard! Why don't you enter the competition, if you can do it like this?" Roark answered: "Because I can't. I couldn't if I tried. I dry up. I go blank. I can't give them what they want. But I can straighten someone else's damn mess when I see it:"

It was morning when he pushed the plans aside. Keating whispered:

"And the elevation?"

"Oh, to hell with your elevation! I don't want to look at your damn Renaissance elevations!" But he looked. He could not prevent his hand from cutting lines across the perspective. "All right, damn you, give them good Renaissance if you must and if there is such a thing! Only I can't do that for you. Figure it out yourself. Something like this. Simpler. Peter, simpler, more direct, as honest as you can make of a dishonest thing. Now go home and try to work out something on this order."

Keating went home. He copied Roark's plans. He worked out Roark's hasty sketch of the elevation into a neat, finished perspective. Then the drawings were mailed, properly addressed to:

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"The Most Beautiful Building in the World" Competition

Cosmo-Slotnick Pictures, Inc.

New York City.

#

The envelope, accompanying the entry, contained the names: "Francon & Heyer, architects, Peter Keating, associated designer."

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Through the months of that winter Roark found no other chances, no offers, no prospects of commissions. He sat at his desk and forgot, at times, to turn on the lights in the early dusk. It was as if the heavy immobility of all the hours that had flowed through the office, of its door, of its air were beginning to seep into his muscles. He would rise and fling a book at the wall, to feel his arm move, to hear the burst of sound. He smiled, amused, picked up the book, and laid it neatly back on the desk. He turned on the desk lamp. Then he stopped, before he had withdrawn his hands from the cone of light under the lamp, and he looked at his hands; he spread his fingers out slowly. Then he remembered what Cameron had said to him long ago. He jerked his hands away. He reached for his coat, turned the lights off, locked the door and went home.

As spring approached he knew that his money would not last much longer. He paid the rent on his office promptly on the first of each month. He wanted the feeling of thirty days ahead, during which he would still own the office. He entered it calmly each morning. He found only that he did not want to look at the calendar when it began to grow dark and he knew that another day of the thirty had gone. When he noticed this, he made himself look at the calendar. It

was a race he was running now, a race between his rent money and...he did not know the name of the other contestant. Perhaps it was every man whom he passed on the street.

When he went up to his office, the elevator operators looked at him in a queer, lazy, curious sort of way; when he spoke, they answered, not insolently, but in an indifferent drawl that seemed to say it would become insolent in a moment. They did not know what he was doing or why; they knew only that he was a man to whom no clients ever came. He attended, because Austen Heller asked him to attend, the few parties Heller gave occasionally; he was asked by guests: "Oh, you're an architect? You'll forgive me, I haven't kept up with architecture--what have you built?" When he answered, he heard them say: "Oh, yes, indeed," and he saw the conscious politeness of their manner tell him that he was an architect by presumption. They had never seen his buildings; they did not know whether his buildings were good or worthless; they knew only that they had never heard of these buildings.

It was a war in which he was invited to fight nothing, yet he was pushed forward to fight, he had to fight, he had no choice--and no adversary.

He passed by buildings under construction. He stopped to look at the steel cages. He felt at times as if the beams and girders were shaping themselves not into a house, but into a barricade to stop him; and the few steps on the sidewalk that separated him from the wooden fence enclosing the construction were the steps he would never be able to take. It was pain, but it was a blunted, unpenetrating pain. It's true, he would tell himself; it's not, his body would answer, the strange, untouchable healthiness of his body.

The Fargo Store had opened. But one building could not save a neighborhood; Fargo's competitors had been right, the tide had turned, was flowing uptown, his customers were deserting him. Remarks were made openly on the decline of John Fargo, who had topped his poor business judgment by an investment in a preposterous kind of a building; which proved, it was stated, that the public would not accept these architectural innovations. It was not stated that the store was the cleanest and brightest in the city; that the skill of its plan made its operation easier than had ever been possible; that the neighborhood had been doomed before its erection. The building took the blame.

Athelstan Beasley, the wit of the architectural profession, the court jester of the A.G.A., who never seemed to be building anything, but organized all the charity balls, wrote in his column entitled "Quips and Quirks" in the A.G.A. Bulletin:

"Well, lads and lassies, here's a fairy tale with a moral: seems there was, once upon a time, a little boy with hair the color of a Hallowe'en pumpkin, who thought that he was better than all you common boys and girls. So to prove it, he up and built a house, which is a very nice house, except that nobody can live in it, and a store, which is a very lovely store, except that it's going bankrupt. He also erected a very eminent structure, to wit: a dogcart on a mud road. This last is reported to be doing very well indeed, which, perhaps, is the right field of endeavor for that little boy."

At the end of March Roark read in the papers about Roger Enright. Roger Enright possessed millions, an oil concern and no sense of restraint. This made his name appear in the papers frequently. He aroused a half-admiring, half-derisive awe by the incoherent variety of his sudden ventures. The latest was a project for a new type of residential development--an apartment building, with each unit complete and isolated like an expensive private home. It was to be known as the Enright House. Enright had declared that he did not want it to look like

anything anywhere else. He had approached and rejected several of the best architects in town.

Roark felt as if this newspaper item were a personal invitation; the kind of chance created expressly for him. For the first time he attempted to go after a commission. He requested an interview with Roger Enright. He got an interview with a secretary. The secretary, a young man who looked bored, asked him several questions about his experience; he asked them slowly, as if it required an effort to decide just what it would be appropriate to ask under the circumstances, since the answers would make no difference whatever; he glanced at some photographs of Roark's buildings, and declared that Mr. Enright would not be interested.

In the first week of April, when Roark had paid his last rental for one more month at the office, he was asked to submit drawings for the new building of the Manhattan Bank Company. He was asked by Mr. Weidler, a member of the board of directors, who was a friend of young Richard Sanborn. Weidler told him: "I've had a stiff fight, Mr. Roark, but I think I've won. I've taken them personally through the Sanborn house, and Dick and I explained a few things. However, the board must see the drawings before they make a decision. So it's not quite certain as yet, I must tell you frankly, but it's almost certain. They've turned down two other architects. They're very much interested in you. Go ahead. Good luck!"

Henry Cameron had had a relapse and the doctor warned his sister that no recovery could be expected. She did not believe it. She felt a new hope, because she saw that Cameron, lying still in bed, looked serene and--almost happy, a word she had never found it possible to associate with her brother.

But she was frightened, one evening, when he said suddenly: "Call Howard. Ask him to come here." In the three years since his retirement he had never called for Roark, he had merely waited for Roark's visits.

Roark arrived within an hour. He sat by the side of Cameron's bed, and Cameron talked to him as usual. He did not mention the special invitation and did not explain. The night was warm and the window of Cameron's bedroom stood open to the dark garden. When he noticed, in a pause between sentences, the silence of the trees outside, the unmoving silence of late hours, Cameron called his sister and said: "Fix the couch in the living room for Howard. He's staying here." Roark looked at him and understood. Roark inclined his head in agreement; he could acknowledge what Cameron had just declared to him only by a quiet glance as solemn as Cameron's.

Roark remained at the house for three days. No reference was made to his staying here--nor to how long he would have to stay. His presence was accepted as a natural fact requiring no comment. Miss Cameron understood--and knew that she must say nothing. She moved about silently, with the meek courage of resignation.

Cameron did not want Roark's continuous presence in his room. He would say: "Go out, take a walk through the garden, Howard. It's beautiful, the grass is coming up." He would lie in bed and watch, with contentment, through the open window, Roark's figure moving among the bare trees that stood against a pale blue sky.

He asked only that Roark eat his meals with him. Miss Cameron would put a tray on Cameron's knees, and serve Roark's meal on a small table by the bed. Cameron seemed to take pleasure in what he had never had nor sought: a sense of warmth in performing a daily routine, the sense of family.

On the evening of the third day Cameron lay back on his pillow, talking as usual, but the words came slowly and he did not move his head. Roark listened and concentrated on not showing that he knew what went on in the terrible pauses between Cameron's words. The words sounded natural, and the strain they cost was to remain Cameron's last secret, as he wished.

Cameron spoke about the future of building materials. "Watch the light metals industry, Howard....In a few...years...you'll see them do some astounding things....Watch the plastics, there's a whole new era...coming from that....You'll find new tools, new means, new forms....You'll have to show...the damn fools...what wealth the human brain has made for them...what possibilities....Last week I read about a new kind of composition tile...and I've thought of a way to use it where nothing...else would do...take, for instance, a small house...about five thousand dollars..."

After a while he stopped and remained silent, his eyes closed. Then Roark heard him whisper suddenly:

"Gail Wynand..."

Roark leaned closer to him, bewildered.

"I don't...hate anybody any more...only Gail Wynand...No, I've never laid eyes on him....But he represents...everything that's wrong with the world...the triumph...of overbearing vulgarity....It's Gail Wynand that you'll have to fight, Howard...."

Then he did not speak for a long time. When he opened his eyes again, he smiled. He said:

"I know...what you're going through at your office just now...." Roark had never spoken to him of that. "No...don't deny and...don't say anything....I know....But...it's all right....Don't be afraid....Do you remember the day when I tried to fire you?...Forget what I said to you then....It was not the whole story....This is...Don't be afraid....It was worth it...."

His voice failed and he could not use it any longer. But the faculty of sight remained untouched and he could lie silently and look at Roark without effort. He died half an hour later.

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Keating saw Catherine often. He had not announced their engagement, but his mother knew, and it was not a precious secret of his own any longer. Catherine thought, at times, that he had dropped the sense of significance in their meetings. She was spared the loneliness of waiting for him; but she had lost the reassurance of his inevitable returns.

Keating had told her: "Let's wait for the results of that movie competition, Katie. It won't be long, they'll announce the decision in May. If I win--I'll be set for life. Then we'll be married. And that's when I'll meet your uncle--and he'll want to meet me. And I've got to win."

"I know you'll win."

"Besides, old Heyer won't last another month. The doctor told us that we can expect a second stroke at any time and that will be that. If it doesn't get him to the graveyard, it'll certainly get him out of the office."

"Oh, Peter, I don't like to hear you talk like that. You mustn't be so...so

terribly selfish."

"I'm sorry, dear. Well...yes, I guess I'm selfish. Everybody is."

He spent more time with Dominique. Dominique watched him complacently, as if he presented no further problem to her. She seemed to find him suitable as an inconsequential companion for an occasional, inconsequential evening. He thought that she liked him. He knew that this was not an encouraging sign.

He forgot at times that she was Francon's daughter; he forgot all the reasons that prompted him to want her. He felt no need to be prompted. He wanted her. He needed no reasons now but the excitement of her presence.

Yet he felt helpless before her. He refused to accept the thought that a woman could remain indifferent to him. But he was not certain even of her indifference. He waited and tried to guess her moods, to respond as he supposed she wished him to respond. He received no answer.

On a spring night they attended a ball together. They danced, and he drew her close, he stressed the touch of his fingers on her body. He knew that she noticed and understood. She did not withdraw; she looked at him with an unmoving glance that was almost expectation. When they were leaving, he held her wrap and let his fingers rest on her shoulders; she did not move or draw the wrap closed; she waited; she let him lift his hands. Then they walked together down to the cab.

She sat silently in a corner of the cab; she had never before considered his presence important enough to require silence. She sat, her legs crossed, her wrap gathered tightly, her fingertips beating in slow rotation against her knee. He closed his hand softly about her forearm. She did not resist; she did not answer; only her fingers stopped beating. His lips touched her hair; it was not a kiss, he merely let his lips rest against her hair for a long time.

When the cab stopped, he whispered: "Dominique...let me come up...for just a moment..."

"Yes," she answered. The word was flat, impersonal, with no sound of invitation. But she had never allowed it before. He followed her, his heart pounding.

There was one fragment of a second, as she entered her apartment, when she stopped, waiting. He stared at her helplessly, bewildered, too happy. He noticed the pause only when she was moving again, walking away from him, into the drawing room. She sat down, and her hands fell limply one at each side, her arms away from her body, leaving her unprotected. Her eyes were half closed, rectangular, empty.

"Dominique..." he whispered, "Dominique...how lovely you are!..."

Then he was beside her, whispering incoherently:

"Dominique...Dominique, I love you...Don't laugh at me, please don't laugh!...My whole life...anything you wish...Don't you know how beautiful you are?...Dominique...I love you..."

He stopped with his arms around her and his face over hers, to catch some hint of response or resistance; he saw nothing. He jerked her violently against him and kissed her lips.

His arms fell open. He let her body fall back against the seat, and he stared at

her, aghast. It had not been a kiss; he had not held a woman in his arms; what he had held and kissed had not been alive. Her lips had not moved in answer against his; her arms had not moved to embrace him; it was not revulsion--he could have understood revulsion. It was as if he could hold her forever or drop her, kiss her again or go further to satisfy his desire--and her body would not know it, would not notice it. She was looking at him, past him. She saw a cigarette stub that had fallen off a tray on a table beside her, she moved her hand and slipped the cigarette back into the tray.

"Dominique," he whispered stupidly, "didn't you want me to kiss you?"

"Yes." She was not laughing at him; she was answering simply and helplessly.

"Haven't you ever been kissed before?"

"Yes. Many times."

"Do you always act like that?"

"Always. Just like that."

"Why did you want me to kiss you?"

"I wanted to try it."

"You're not human, Dominique."

She lifted her head, she got up and the sharp precision of the movement was her own again. He knew he would hear no simple, confessing helplessness in her voice; he knew the intimacy was ended, even though her words, when she spoke, were more intimate and revealing than anything she had said; but she spoke as if she did not care what she revealed or to whom:

"I suppose I'm one of those freaks you hear about, an utterly frigid woman. I'm sorry, Peter. You see? You have no rivals, but that includes you also. A disappointment, darling?"

"You...you'll outgrow it...some day..."

"I'm really not so young, Peter. Twenty-five. It must be an interesting experience to sleep with a man. I've wanted to want it. I should think it would be exciting to become a dissolute woman. I am, you know, in everything but in fact....Peter, you look as if you were going to blush in a moment, and that's very amusing."

"Dominique! Haven't you ever been in love at all? Not even a little?"

"I haven't. I really wanted to fall in love with you. I thought it would be convenient. I'd have no trouble with you at all. But you see? I can't feel anything. I can't feel any difference, whether it's you or Alvah Scarret or Lucius Heyer."

He got up. He did not want to look at her. He walked to a window and stood, staring out, his hands clasped behind his back. He had forgotten his desire and her beauty, but he remembered now that she was Francon's daughter.

"Dominique, will you marry me?"

He knew he had to say it now; if he let himself think of her, he would never say

it; what he felt for her did not matter any longer; he could not let it stand between him and his future; and what lie felt for her was growing into hatred.

"You're not serious?" she asked.

He turned to her. He spoke rapidly, easily; he was lying now, and so he was sure of himself and it was not difficult:

"I love you, Dominique. I'm crazy about you. Give me a chance. If there's no one else, why not? You'll learn to love me--because I understand you. I'll be patient. I'll make you happy."

She shuddered suddenly, and then she laughed. She laughed simply, completely; he saw the pale form of her dress trembling; she stood straight, her head thrown back, like a string shaking with the vibrations of a blinding insult to him; an insult, because her laughter was not bitter or mocking, but quite simply gay.

Then it stopped. She stood looking at him. She said earnestly:

"Peter, if I ever want to punish myself for something terrible, if I ever want to punish myself disgustingly--I'll marry you." She added: "Consider it a promise."

"I'll wait--no matter what reason you choose for it."

Then she smiled gaily, the cold, gay smile he dreaded.

"Really, Peter, you don't have to do it, you know. You'll get that partnership anyway. And we'll always be good friends. Now its time for you to go home. Don't forget, you're taking me to the horse show Wednesday. Oh, yes, we're going to the horse show Wednesday. I adore horse shows. Good night, Peter."

He left and walked home through the warm spring night. He walked savagely. If, at that moment, someone had offered him sole ownership of the firm of Francon & Heyer at the price of marrying Dominique, he would have refused it. He knew also, hating himself, that he would not refuse, if it were offered to him on the following morning.

15.

THIS was fear. This was what one feels in nightmares, thought Peter Keating, only then one awakens when it becomes unbearable, but he could neither awaken nor bear it any longer. It had been growing, for days, for weeks, and now it had caught him: this lewd, unspeakable dread of defeat. He would lose the competition, he was certain that he would lose it, and the certainty grew as each day of waiting passed. He could not work; he jerked when people spoke to him; he had not slept for nights.

He walked toward the house of Lucius Heyer. He tried not to notice the faces of the people he passed, but he had to notice; he had always looked at people; and people looked at him, as they always did. He wanted to shout at them and tell them to turn away, to leave him alone. They were staring at him, he thought, because he was to fail and they knew it.

He was going to Heyer's house to save himself from the coming disaster in the only way he saw left to him. If he failed in that competition--and he knew he was to fail--Francon would be shocked and disillusioned; then if Heyer died, as

he could die at any moment, Francon would hesitate--in the bitter aftermath of a public humiliation--to accept Keating as his partner; if Francon hesitated, the game was lost. There were others waiting for the opportunity: Bennett, whom he had been unable to get out of the office; Claude Stengel, who had been doing very well on his own, and had approached Francon with an offer to buy Heyer's place. Keating had nothing to count on, except Francon's uncertain faith in him. Once another partner replaced Heyer, it would be the end of Keating's future. He had come too close and had missed. That was never forgiven.

Through the sleepless nights the decision had become clear and hard in his mind: he had to close the issue at once; he had to take advantage of Francon's deluded hopes before the winner of the competition was announced; he had to force Heyer out and take his place; he had only a few days left.

He remembered Francon's gossip about Heyer's character. He looked through the files in Heyer's office and found what he had hoped to find. It was a letter from a contractor, written fifteen years ago; it stated merely that the contractor was enclosing a check for twenty thousand dollars due Mr. Heyer. Keating looked up the records for that particular building; it did seem that the structure had cost more than it should have cost. That was the year when Heyer had started his collection of porcelain.

He found Heyer alone in his study. It was a small, dim room and the air in it seemed heavy, as if it had not been disturbed for years. The dark mahogany paneling, the tapestries, the priceless pieces of old furniture were kept faultlessly clean, but the room smelt, somehow, of indigence and of decay. There was a single lamp burning on a small table in a corner, and five delicate, precious cups of ancient porcelain on the table. Heyer sat hunched, examining the cups in the dim light, with a vague, pointless enjoyment. He shuddered a little when his old valet admitted Keating, and he blinked in vapid bewilderment, but he asked Keating to sit down.

When he heard the first sounds of his own voice, Keating knew he had lost the fear that had followed him on his way through the streets; his voice was cold and steady. Tim Davis, he thought, Claude Stengel, and now just one more to be removed.

He explained what he wanted, spreading upon the still air of the room one short, concise, complete paragraph of thought, perfect as a gem with clean edges.

"And so, unless you inform Francon of your retirement tomorrow morning," he concluded, holding the letter by a corner between two fingers, "this goes to the A.G.A."

He waited. Heyer sat still, with his pale, bulging eyes blank and his mouth open in a perfect circle. Keating shuddered and wondered whether he was speaking to an idiot.

Then Heyer's mouth moved and his pale pink tongue showed, flickering against his lower teeth.

"But I don't want to retire." He said it simply, guilelessly, in a little petulant whine.

"You will have to retire."

"I don't want to. I'm not going to. I'm a famous architect. I've always been a famous architect. I wish people would stop bothering me. They all want me to retire. I'll tell you a secret." He leaned forward; he whispered slyly: "You may

not know it, but I know, he can't deceive me; Guy wants me to retire. He thinks he's outwitting me, but I can see through him. That's a good one on Guy." He giggled softly.

"I don't think you understood me. Do you understand this?" Keating pushed the letter into Heyer's half-closed fingers.

He watched the thin sheet trembling as Heyer held it. Then it dropped to the table and Heyer's left hand with the paralyzed fingers jabbed at it blindly, purposelessly, like a hook. He said, gulping:

"You can't send this to the A.G.A. They'll have my license taken away."

"Certainly," said Keating, "they will."

"And it will be in the papers."

"In all of them."

"You can't do that."

"I'm going to--unless you retire."

Heyer's shoulders drew down to the edge of the table. His head remained above the edge, timidly, as if he were ready to draw it also out of sight.

"You won't do that please you won't," Heyer mumbled in one long whine without pauses. "You're a nice boy you're a very nice boy you won't do it will you?"

The yellow square of paper lay on the table. Heyer's useless left hand reached for it, crawling slowly over the edge. Keating leaned forward and snatched the letter from under his hand.

Heyer looked at him, his head bent to one side, his mouth open. He looked as if he expected Keating to strike him; with a sickening, pleading glance that said he would allow Keating to strike him.

"Please," whispered Heyer, "you won't do that, will you? I don't feel very well. I've never hurt you. I seem to remember, I did something very nice for you once."

"What?" snapped Keating. "What did you do for me?"

"Your name's Peter Keating...Peter Keating...I remember...I did something nice for you....You're the boy Guy has so much faith in. Don't trust Guy. I don't trust him. But I like you. We'll make you a designer one of these days." His mouth remained hanging open on the word. A thin strand of saliva trickled down from the corner of his mouth. "Please...don't..."

Keating's eyes were bright with disgust; aversion goaded him on; he had to make it worse because he couldn't stand it.

"You'll be exposed publicly," said Keating, the sounds of his voice glittering. "You'll be denounced as a grafter. People will point at you. They'll print your picture in the papers. The owners of that building will sue you. They'll throw you in jail."

Heyer said nothing. He did not move. Keating heard the cups on the table tinkling suddenly. He could not see the shaking of Heyer's body. He heard a

thin, glassy ringing in the silence of the room, as if the cups were trembling of themselves.

"Get out!" said Keating, raising his voice, not to hear that sound. "Get out of the firm! What do you want to stay for? You're no good. You've never been any good."

The yellow face at the edge of the table opened its mouth and made a wet, gurgling sound like a moan.

Keating sat easily, leaning forward, his knees spread apart, one elbow resting on his knee, the hand hanging down, swinging the letter.

"I..." Heyer choked. "I..."

"Shut up! You've got nothing to say, except yes or no. Think fast now. I'm not here to argue with you."

Heyer stopped trembling. A shadow cut diagonally across his face. Keating saw one eye that did not blink, and half a mouth, open, the darkness flowing in through the hole, into the face, as if it were drowning.

"Answer me!" Keating screamed, frightened suddenly. "Why don't you answer me?"

The half-face swayed and he saw the head lurch forward; it fell down on the table, and went on, and rolled to the floor, as it cut off; two of the cups fell after it, cracking softly to pieces on the carpet. The first thing Keating felt was relief to see that the body had followed the head and lay crumpled in a heap on the floor, intact. There had been no sound; only the muffled, musical bursting of porcelain.

He'll be furious, thought Keating, looking down at the cups. He had jumped to his feet, he was kneeling, gathering the pieces pointlessly; he saw that they were broken beyond repair. He knew he was thinking also, at the same time, that it had come, that second stroke they had been expecting, and that he would have to do something about it in a moment, but that it was all right, because Heyer would have to retire now.

Then he moved on his knees closer to Heyer's body. He wondered why he did not want to touch it. "Mr. Heyer," he called. His voice was soft, almost respectful. He lifted Heyer's head, cautiously. He let it drop. He heard no sound of its falling. He heard the hiccough in his own throat. Heyer was dead.

He sat beside the body, his buttocks against his heels, his hands spread on his knees. He looked straight ahead; his glance stopped on the folds of the hangings by the door; he wondered whether the gray sheen was dust or the nap of velvet and was it velvet and how old-fashioned it was to have hangings by a door. Then he felt himself shaking. He wanted to vomit. He rose, walked across the room and threw the door open, because he remembered that there was the rest of the apartment somewhere and a valet in it, and he called, trying to scream for help.
#

Keating came to the office as usual. He answered questions, he explained that Heyer had asked him, that day, to come to his house after dinner; Heyer had wanted to discuss the matter of his retirement. No one doubted the story and Keating knew that no one ever would. Heyer's end had come as everybody had expected it to come. Francon felt nothing but relief. "We knew he would, sooner or later," said Francon. "Why regret that he spared himself and all of us a prolonged agony?"

Keating's manner was calmer than it had been for weeks. It was the calm of blank stupor. The thought followed him, gentle, unstressed, monotonous, at his work, at home, at night: he was a murderer...no, but almost a murderer...almost a murderer...He knew that it had not been an accident; he knew he had counted on the shock and the terror; he had counted on that second stroke which would send Heyer to the hospital for the rest of his days. But was that all he had expected? Hadn't he known what else a second stroke could mean? Had he counted on that? He tried to remember. He tried, wringing his mind dry. He felt nothing. He expected to feel nothing, one way or another. Only he wanted to know. He did not notice what went on in the office around him. He forgot that he had but a short time left to close the deal with Francon about the partnership.

A few days after Heyer's death Francon called him to his office.

"Sit down, Peter," he said with a brighter smile than usual. "Well, I have some good news for you, kid. They read Lucius's will this morning. He had no relatives left, you know. Well, I was surprised, I didn't give him enough credit, I guess, but it seems he could make a nice gesture on occasion. He's left everything to you....Pretty grand, isn't it? Now you won't have to worry about investment when we make arrangements for...What's the matter, Peter?...Peter, my boy, are you sick?"

Keating's face fell upon his arm on the corner of the desk. He could not let Francon see his face. He was going to be sick; sick, because through the horror, he had caught himself wondering how much Heyer had actually left....

The will had been made out five years ago; perhaps in a senseless spurt of affection for the only person who had shown Heyer consideration in the office; perhaps as a gesture against his partner; it had been made and forgotten. The estate amounted to two hundred thousand dollars, plus Heyer's interest in the firm and his porcelain collection.

Keating left the office early, that day, not hearing the congratulations. He went home, told the news to his mother, left her gasping in the middle of the living room, and locked himself in his bedroom. He went out, saying nothing, before dinner. He had no dinner that night, but he drank himself into a ferocious lucidity, at his favorite speak-easy. And in that heightened state of luminous vision, his head nodding over a glass but his mind steady, he told himself that he had nothing to regret; he had done what anyone would have done; Catherine had said it, he was selfish; everybody was selfish; it was not a pretty thing, to be selfish, but he was not alone in it; he had merely been luckier than most; he had been, because he was better than most; he felt fine; he hoped the useless questions would never come back to him again; every man for himself, he muttered, falling asleep on the table.

The useless questions never came back to him again. He had no time for them in the days that followed. He had won the Cosmo-Slotnick competition.

#

Peter Keating had known it would be a triumph, but he had not expected the thing that happened. He had dreamed of a sound of trumpets; he had not foreseen a symphonic explosion.

It began with the thin ringing of a telephone, announcing the names of the winners. Then every phone in the office joined in, screaming, bursting from under the fingers of the operator who could barely control the switchboard; calls from every paper in town, from famous architects, questions, demands for interviews, congratulations. Then the flood rushed out of the elevators, poured

through the office doors, the messages, the telegrams, the people Keating knew, the people he had never seen before, the reception clerk losing all sense, not knowing whom to admit or refuse, and Keating shaking hands, an endless stream of hands like a wheel with soft moist cogs flapping against his fingers. He did not know what he said at that first interview, with Francon's office full of people and cameras; Francon had thrown the doors of his liquor cabinet wide-open. Francon gulped to all these people that the Cosmo-Slotnick building had been created by Peter Keating alone; Francon did not care; he was magnanimous in a spurt of enthusiasm; besides, it made a good story.

It made a better story than Francon had expected. From the pages of newspapers the face of Peter Keating looked upon the country, the handsome, wholesome, smiling face with the brilliant eyes and the dark curls; it headed columns of print about poverty, struggle, aspiration and unremitting toil that had won their reward; about the faith of a mother who had sacrificed everything to her boy's success; about the "Cinderella of Architecture."

Cosmo-Slotnick were pleased; they had not thought that prize-winning architects could also be young, handsome and poor--well, so recently poor. They had discovered a boy genius; Cosmo-Slotnick adored boy geniuses; Mr. Slotnick was one himself, being only forty-three.

Keating's drawings of the "most beautiful skyscraper on earth" were reproduced in the papers, with the words of the award underneath: "...for the brilliant skill and simplicity of its plan...for its clean, ruthless efficiency...for its ingenious economy of space...for the masterful blending of the modern with the traditional in Art...to Francon & Heyer and Peter Keating..."

Keating appeared in newsreels, shaking hands with Mr. Shupe and Mr. Slotnick, and the subtitle announced what these two gentlemen thought of his building. Keating appeared in newsreels, shaking hands with Miss Dimples Williams, and the subtitle announced what he thought of her current picture. He appeared at architectural banquets and at film banquets, in the place of honor, and he had to make speeches, forgetting whether he was to speak of buildings or of movies. He appeared at architectural clubs and at fan clubs. Cosmo-Slotnick put out a composite picture of Keating and of his building, which could be had for a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and two bits. He made a personal appearance each evening, for a week, on the stage of the Cosmo Theater, with the first run of the latest Cosmo-Slotnick special; he bowed over the footlights, slim and graceful in a black tuxedo, and he spoke for two minutes on the significance of architecture. He presided as judge at a beauty contest in Atlantic City, the winner to be awarded a screen test by Cosmo-Slotnick. He was photographed with a famous prize-fighter, under the caption: "Champions." A scale model of his building was made and sent on tour, together with the photographs of the best among the other entries, to be exhibited in the foyers of Cosmo-Slotnick theaters throughout the country.

Mrs. Keating had sobbed at first, clasped Peter in her arms and gulped that she could not believe it. She had stammered, answering questions about Petey, and she had posed for pictures, embarrassed, eager to please. Then she became used to it. She told Peter, shrugging, that of course he had won, it was nothing to gape at, no one else could have won. She acquired a brisk little tone of condescension for the reporters. She was distinctly annoyed when she was not included in the photographs taken of Petey. She acquired a mink coat.

Keating let himself be carried by the torrent. He needed the people and the clamor around him. There were no questions and no doubts when he stood on a platform over a sea of faces; the air was heavy, compact, saturated with a single solvent--admiration; there was no room for anything else. He was great;

great as the number of people who told him so. He was right; right at the number of people who believed it. He looked at the faces, at the eyes; he saw himself born in them, he saw himself being granted the gift of life. That was Peter Keating, that, the reflection in those staring pupils, and his body was only its reflection.

He found time to spend two hours with Catherine, one evening. He held her in his arms and she whispered radiant plans for their future; he glanced at her with contentment; he did not hear her words; he was thinking of how it would look if they were photographed like this together and in how many papers it would be syndicated.

He saw Dominique once. She was leaving the city for the summer. Dominique was disappointing. She congratulated him, quite correctly; but she looked at him as she had always looked, as if nothing had happened. Of all architectural publications, her column had been the only one that had never mentioned the Cosmo-Slotnick competition or its winner.

"I'm going to Connecticut," she told him. "I'm taking over Father's place down there for the summer. He's letting me have it all to myself. No, Peter, you can't come to visit me. Not even once. I'm going there so I won't have to see anybody." He was disappointed, but it did not spoil the triumph of his days. He was not afraid of Dominique any longer. He felt confident that he could bring her to change her attitude, that he would see the change when she came back in the fall.

But there was one thing which did spoil his triumph; not often and not too loudly. He never tired of hearing what was said about him; but he did not like to hear too much about his building. And when he had to hear it, he did not mind the comments on "the masterful blending of the modern with the traditional" in its facade; but when they spoke of the plan--and they spoke so much of the plan--when he heard about "the brilliant skill and simplicity...the clean, ruthless efficiency...the ingenious economy of space..." when he heard it and thought of...He did not think it. There were no words in his brain. He would not allow them. There was only a heavy, dark feeling--and a name.

For two weeks after the award he pushed this thing out of his mind, as a thing unworthy of his concern, to be buried as his doubting, humble past was buried. All winter long he had kept his own sketches of the building with the pencil lines cut across them by another's hands; on the evening of the award he had burned them; it was the first thing he had done.

But the thing would not leave him. Then he grasped suddenly that it was not a vague threat, but a practical danger; and he lost all fear of it. He could deal with a practical danger, he could dispose of it quite simply. He chuckled with relief, he telephoned Roark's office, and made an appointment to see him.

He went to that appointment confidently. For the first time in his life he felt free of the strange uneasiness which he had never been able to explain or escape in Roark's presence. He felt safe now. He was through with Howard Roark.
#

Roark sat at the desk in his office, waiting. The telephone had rung once, that morning, but it had been only Peter Keating asking for an appointment. He had forgotten now that Keating was coming. He was waiting for the telephone. He had become dependent on that telephone in the last few weeks. He was to hear at any moment about his drawings for the Manhattan Bank Company.

His rent on the office was long since overdue. So was the rent on the room where

he lived. He did not care about the room; he could tell the landlord to wait; the landlord waited; it would not have mattered greatly if he had stopped waiting. But it mattered at the office. He told the rental agent that he would have to wait; he did not ask for the delay; he only said flatly, quietly, that there would be a delay, which was all he knew how to do. But his knowledge that he needed his alms from the rental agent, that too much depended on it, and made it sound like begging in his own mind. That was torture. All right, he thought, it's torture. What of it?

The telephone bill was overdue for two months. He had received the final warning. The telephone was to be disconnected in a few days. He had to wait. So much could happen in a few days.

The answer of the bank board, which Weidler had promised him long ago, had been postponed from week to week. The board could reach no decision; there had been objectors and there had been violent supporters; there had been conferences; Weidler told him eloquently little, but he could guess much; there had been days of silence, of silence in the office, of silence in the whole city, of silence within him. He waited.

He sat, slumped across the desk, his face on his arm, his fingers on the stand of the telephone. He thought dimly that he should not sit like that; but he felt very tired today. He thought that he should take his hand off that phone; but he did not move it. Well, yes, he depended on that phone, he could smash it, but he would still depend on it; he and every breath in him and every bit of him. His fingers rested on the stand without moving. It was this and the mail; he had lied to himself also about the mail; he had lied when he had forced himself not to leap, as a rare letter fell through the slot in the door, not to run forward, but to wait, to stand looking at the white envelope on the floor, then to walk to it slowly and pick it up. The slot in the door and the telephone--there was nothing else left to him of the world.

He raised his head, as he thought of it, to look down at the door, at the foot of the door. There was nothing. It was late in the afternoon, probably past the time of the last delivery. He raised his wrist to glance at his watch; he saw his bare wrist; the watch had been pawned. He turned to the window; there was a clock he could distinguish on a distant tower; it was half past four; there would be no other delivery today.

He saw that his hand was lifting the telephone receiver. His fingers were dialing the number.

"No, not yet," Weidler's voice told him over the wire. "We had that meeting scheduled for yesterday, but it had to be called off....I'm keeping after them like a bulldog....I can promise you that we'll have a definite answer tomorrow. I can almost promise you. If not tomorrow, then it will have to wait over the week end, but by Monday I promise it for certain....You've been wonderfully patient with us, Mr. Roark. We appreciate it." Roark dropped the receiver. He closed his eyes. He thought he would allow himself to rest, just to rest blankly like this for a few minutes, before he would begin to think of what the date on the telephone notice had been and in what way he could manage to last until Monday.

"Hello, Howard," said Peter Keating.

He opened his eyes. Keating had entered and stood before him, smiling. He wore a light tan spring coat, thrown open, the loops of its belt like handles at his sides, a blue cornflower in his buttonhole. He stood, his legs apart, his fists on his hips, his hat on the back of his head, his black curls so bright and

crisp over his pale forehead that one expected to see drops of spring dew glistening on them as on the cornflower.

"Hello, Peter," said Roark.

Keating sat down comfortably, took his hat off, dropped it in the middle of the desk, and clasped one hand over each knee with a brisk little slap.

"Well, Howard, things are happening, aren't they?"

"Congratulations."

"Thanks. What's the matter, Howard? You look like hell. Surely, you're not overworking yourself, from what I hear?"

This was not the manner he had intended to assume. He had planned the interview to be smooth and friendly. Well, he decided, he'd switch back to that later. But first he had to show that he was not afraid of Roark, that he'd never be afraid again.

"No, I'm not overworking."

"Look, Howard, why don't you drop it?"

That was something he had not intended saying at all. His mouth remained open a little, in astonishment.

"Drop what?"

"The pose. Oh, the ideals, if you prefer. Why don't you come down to earth? Why don't you start working like everybody else? Why don't you stop being a damn fool?" He felt himself rolling down a hill, without brakes. He could not stop.

"What's the matter, Peter?"

"How do you expect to get along in the world? You have to live with people, you know. There are only two ways. You can join them or you can fight them. But you don't seem to be doing either."

"No. Not either."

"And people don't want you. They don't want you! Aren't you afraid?"

"No."

"You haven't worked for a year. And you won't. Who'll ever give you work? You might have a few hundreds left--and then it's the end."

"That's wrong, Peter. I have fourteen dollars left, and fifty-seven cents."

"Well? And look at me! I don't care if it's crude to say that myself. That's not the point. I'm not boasting. It doesn't matter who says it. But look at me! Remember how we started? Then look at us now. And then think that it's up to you. Just drop that fool delusion that you're better than everybody else--and go to work. In a year, you'll have an office that'll make you blush to think of this dump. You'll have people running after you, you'll have clients, you'll have friends, you'll have an army of draftsmen to order around!...Hell! Howard, it's nothing to me--what can it mean to me?--but this time I'm not fishing for anything for myself, in fact I know that you'd make a dangerous competitor, but

I've got to say this to you. Just think, Howard, think of it! You'll be rich, you'll be famous, you'll be respected, you'll be praised, you'll be admired--you'll be one of us!...Well?...Say something! Why don't you say something?"

He saw that Roark's eyes were not empty and scornful, but attentive and wondering. It was close to some sort of surrender for Roark, because he had not dropped the iron sheet in his eyes, because he allowed his eyes to be puzzled and curious--and almost helpless.

"Look, Peter. I believe you. I know that you have nothing to gain by saying this. I know more than that. I know that you don't want me to succeed--it's all right, I'm not reproaching you, I've always known it--you don't want me ever to reach these things you're offering me. And yet you're pushing me on to reach them, quite sincerely. And you know that if I take your advice, I'll reach them. And it's not love for me, because that wouldn't make you so angry--and so frightened....Peter, what is it that disturbs you about me as I am?"

"I don't know..." whispered Rearing.

He understood that it was a confession, that answer of his, and a terrifying one. He did not know the nature of what he had confessed and he felt certain that Roark did not know it either. But the thing had been bared; they could not grasp it, but they felt its shape. And it made them sit silently, facing each other, in astonishment, in resignation.

"Pull yourself together, Peter," said Roark gently, as to a comrade. "We'll never speak of that again."

Then Keating said suddenly, his voice clinging in relief to the bright vulgarity of its new tone:

"Aw hell, Howard, I was only talking good plain horse sense. Now if you wanted to work like a normal person--"

"Shut up!" snapped Roark.

Keating leaned back, exhausted. He had nothing else to say. He had forgotten what he had come here to discuss.

"Now," said Roark, "what did you want to tell me about the competition?"

Keating jerked forward. He wondered what had made Roark guess that. And then it became easier, because he forgot the rest in a sweeping surge of resentment.

"Oh, yes!" said Keating crisply, a bright edge of irritation in the sound of his voice. "Yes, I did want to speak to you about that. Thanks for reminding me. Of course, you'd guess it, because you know that I'm not an ungrateful swine. I really came here to thank you, Howard. I haven't forgotten that you had a share in that building, you did give me some advice on it. I'd be the first one to give you part of the credit."

"That's not necessary."

"Oh, it's not that I'd mind, but I'm sure you wouldn't want me to say anything about it. And I'm sure you don't want to say anything yourself, because you know how it is, people are so funny, they misinterpret everything in such a stupid way....But since I'm getting part of the award money, I thought it's only fair to let you have some of it. I'm glad that it comes at a time when you need it so

badly."

He produced his billfold, pulled from it a check he had made out in advance and put it down on the desk. It read: "Pay to the order of Howard Roark--the sum of five hundred dollars."

"Thank you, Peter," said Roark, taking the check.

Then he turned it over, took his fountain pen, wrote on the back: "Pay to the order of Peter Keating," signed and handed the check to Keating.

"And here's my bribe to you, Peter," he said. "For the same purpose. To keep your mouth shut."

Keating stared at him blankly.

"That's all I can offer you now," said Roark. "You can't extort anything from me at present, but later, when I'll have money, I'd like to ask you please not to blackmail me. I'm telling you frankly that you could. Because I don't want anyone to know that I had anything to do with that building."

He laughed at the slow look of comprehension on Keating's face.

"No?" said Roark. "You don't want to blackmail me on that?...Go home, Peter. You're perfectly safe. I'll never say a word about it. It's yours, the building and every girder of it and every foot of plumbing and every picture of your face in the papers."

Then Keating jumped to his feet. He was shaking.

"God damn you!" he screamed. "God damn you! Who do you think you are? Who told you that you could do this to people? So you're too good for that building? You want to make me ashamed of it? You rotten, lousy, conceited bastard! Who are you? You don't even have the wits to know that you're a flop, an incompetent, a beggar, a failure, a failure, a failure! And you stand there pronouncing judgment! You, against the whole country! You against everybody! Why should I listen to you? You can't frighten me. You can't touch me. I have the whole world with me!...Don't stare at me like that! I've always hated you! You didn't know that, did you? I've always hated you! I always will! I'll break you some day, I swear I will, if it's the last thing I do!"

"Peter," said Roark, "why betray so much?"

Keating's breath failed on a choked moan. He slumped down on a chair, he sat still, his hands clasping the sides of the seat under him.

After a while he raised his head. He asked woodenly:

"Oh God, Howard, what have I been saying?"

"Are you all right now? Can you go?"

"Howard, I'm sorry. I apologize, if you want me to." His voice was raw and dull, without conviction. "I lost my head. Guess I'm just unstrung. I didn't mean any of it. I don't know why I said it. Honestly, I don't."

"Fix your collar. It's unfastened."

"I guess I was angry about what you did with that check. But I suppose you were

insulted, too. I'm sorry. I'm stupid like that sometimes. I didn't mean to offend you. We'll just destroy the damn thing."

He picked up the check, struck a match, cautiously watched the paper burn till he had to drop the last scrap.

"Howard, we'll forget it?"

"Don't you think you'd better go now?"

Keating rose heavily, his hands poked about in a few useless gestures, and he mumbled:

"Well...well, good night, Howard. I...I'll see you soon....It's because so much's happened to me lately....Guess I need a rest....So long, Howard...."

When he stepped out into the hall and closed the door behind him, Keating felt an icy sense of relief. He felt heavy and very tired, but dreadingly sure of himself. He had acquired the knowledge of one thing: he hated Roark. It was not necessary to doubt and wonder and squirm in uneasiness any longer. It was simple. He hated Roark. The reasons? It was not necessary to wonder about the reasons. It was necessary only to hate, to hate blindly, to hate patiently, to hate without anger; only to hate, and let nothing intervene, and not let oneself forget, ever.

#

The telephone rang late on Monday afternoon.

"Mr. Roark?" said Weidler. "Can you come right over? I don't want to say anything over the phone, but get here at once." The voice sounded clear, gay, radiantly premonitory.

Roark looked at the window, at the clock on the distant tower. He sat laughing at that clock, as at a friendly old enemy; he would not need it any longer, he would have a watch of his own again. He threw his head back in defiance to that pale gray dial hanging high over the city.

He rose and reached for his coat. He threw his shoulders back, slipping the coat on; he felt pleasure in the jolt of his muscles.

In the street outside, he took a taxi which he could not afford.

The chairman of the board was waiting for him in his office, with Weidler and with the vice-president of the Manhattan Bank Company. There was a long conference table in the room, and Roark's drawings were spread upon it. Weidler rose when he entered and walked to meet him, his hand outstretched. It was in the air of the room, like an overture to the words Weidler uttered, and Roark was not certain of the moment when he heard them, because he thought he had heard them the instant he entered.

"Well, Mr. Roark, the commission's yours," said Weidler.

Roark bowed. It was best not to trust his voice for a few minutes.

The chairman smiled amiably, inviting him to sit down. Roark sat down by the side of the table that supported his drawings. His hand rested on the table. The polished mahogany felt warm and living under his fingers; it was almost as if he were pressing his hand against the foundations of his building; his greatest building, fifty stories to rise in the center of Manhattan.

"I must tell you," the chairman was saying, "that we've had a hell of a fight over that building of yours. Thank God it's over. Some of our members just couldn't swallow your radical innovations. You know how stupidly conservative some people are. But we've found a way to please them, and we got their consent. Mr. Weidler here was really magnificently convincing on your behalf."

A great deal more was said by the three men. Roark barely heard it. He was thinking of the first bite of machine into earth that begins an excavation. Then he heard the chairman saying: "...and so it's yours, on one minor condition." He heard that and looked at the chairman.

"It's a small compromise, and when you agree to it we can sign the contract. It's only an inconsequential matter of the building's appearance. I understand that you modernists attach no great importance to a mere facade, it's the plan that counts with you, quite rightly, and we wouldn't think of altering your plan in any way, it's the logic of the plan that sold us on the building. So I'm sure you won't mind."

"What do you want?"

"It's only a matter of a slight alteration in the facade. I'll show you. Our Mr. Parker's son is studying architecture and we had him draw us up a sketch, just a rough sketch to illustrate what we had in mind and to show the members of the board, because they couldn't have visualized the compromise we offered. Here it is."

He pulled a sketch from under the drawings on the table and handed it to Roark.

It was Roark's building on the sketch, very neatly drawn. It was his building, but it had a simplified Doric portico in front, a cornice on top, and his ornament was replaced by a stylized Greek ornament.

Roark got up. He had to stand. He concentrated on the effort of standing. It made the rest easier. He leaned on one straight arm, his hand closed over the edge of the table, the tendons showing under the skin of his wrist.

"You see the point?" said the chairman soothingly. "Our conservatives simply refused to accept a queer stark building like yours. And they claim that the public won't accept it either. So we hit upon the middle course. In this way, though it's not traditional architecture of course, it will give the public the impression of what they're accustomed to. It adds a certain air of sound, stable dignity--and that's what we want in a bank, isn't it? It does seem to be an unwritten law that a bank must have a Classic portico--and a bank is not exactly the right institution to parade law-breaking and rebellion. Undermines that intangible feeling of confidence, you know. People don't trust novelty. But this is the scheme that pleased everybody. Personally, I wouldn't insist on it, but I really don't see that it spoils anything. And that's what the board has decided. Of course, we don't mean that we want you to follow this sketch. But it gives you our general idea and you'll work it out yourself, make your own adaptation of the Classic motive to the facade."

Then Roark answered. The men could not classify the tone of his voice; they could not decide whether it was too great a calm or too great an emotion. They concluded that it was calm, because the voice moved forward evenly, without stress, without color, each syllable spaced as by a machine; only the air in the room was not the air that vibrates to a calm voice.

They concluded that there was nothing abnormal in the manner of the man who was

speaking, except the fact that his right hand would not leave the edge of the table, and when he had to move the drawings, he did it with his left hand, like a man with one arm paralyzed.

He spoke for a long time. He explained why this structure could not have a Classic motive on its facade. He explained why an honest building, like an honest man, had to be of one piece and one faith; what constituted the life source, the idea in any existing thing or creature, and why--if one smallest part committed treason to that idea--the thing of the creature was dead; and why the good, the high and the noble on earth was only that which kept its integrity.

The chairman interrupted him:

"Mr. Roark, I agree with you. There's no answer to what you're saying. But unfortunately, in practical life, one can't always be so flawlessly consistent. There's always the incalculable human element of emotion. We can't fight that with cold logic. This discussion is actually superfluous. I can agree with you, but I can't help you. The matter is closed. It was the board's final decision--after more than usually prolonged consideration, as you know."

"Will you let me appear before the board and speak to them?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Roark, but the board will not re-open the question for further debate. It was final. I can only ask you to state whether you agree to accept the commission on our terms or not. I must admit that the board has considered the possibility of your refusal. In which case, the name of another architect, one Gordon L. Prescott, has been mentioned most favorably as an alternative. But I told the board that I felt certain you would accept."

He waited. Roark said nothing.

"You understand the situation, Mr. Roark?"

"Yes," said Roark. His eyes were lowered. He was looking down at the drawings.

"Well?"

Roark did not answer.

"Yes or no, Mr. Roark?"

Roark's head leaned back. He closed his eyes.

"No," said Roark.

After a while the chairman asked:

"Do you realize what you're doing?"

"Quite," said Roark.

"Good God!" Weidler cried suddenly. "Don't you know how big a commission this is? You're a young man, you won't get another chance like this. And...all right, damn it, I'll say it! You need this! I know how badly you need it!"

Roark gathered the drawings from the table, rolled them together and put them under his arm.

"It's sheer insanity!" Weidler moaned. "I want you. We want your building. You need the commission. Do you have to be quite so fanatical and selfless about it?"

"What?" Roark asked incredulously.

"Fanatical and selfless."

Roark smiled. He looked down at his drawings. His elbow moved a little, pressing them to his body. He said:

"That was the most selfish thing you've ever seen a man do."

He walked back to his office. He gathered his drawing instruments and the few things he had there. It made one package and he carried it under his arm. He locked the door and gave the key to the rental agent. He told the agent that he was closing his office. He walked home and left the package there. Then he went to Mike Donnigan's house.

"No?" Mike asked, after one look at him.

"No," said Roark.

"What happened?"

"I'll tell you some other time."

"The bastards!"

"Never mind that, Mike."

"How about the office now?"

"I've closed the office."

"For good?"

"For the time being."

"God damn them all, Red! God damn them!"

"Shut up. I need a job, Mike. Can you help me?"

"Me?"

"I don't know anyone in those trades here. Not anyone that would want me. You know them all."

"In what trades? What are you talking about?"

"In the building trades. Structural work. As I've done before."

"You mean--a plain workman's job?"

"I mean a plain workman's job."

"You're crazy, you God-damn fool!"

"Cut it, Mike. Will you get me a job?"

"But why in hell? You can get a decent job in an architect's office. You know you can."

"I won't, Mike. Not ever again."

"Why?"

"I don't want to touch it. I don't want to see it. I don't want to help them do what they're doing."

"You can get a nice clean job in some other line."

"I would have to think on a nice clean job. I don't want to think. Not their way. It will have to be their way, no matter where I go. I want a job where I won't have to think."

"Architects don't take workmen's jobs."

"That's all this architect can do."

"You can learn something in no time."

"I don't want to learn anything."

"You mean you want me to get you into a construction gang, here, in town?"

"That's what I mean."

"No, God damn you! I can't! I won't! I won't do it!"

"Why?"

"Red, to be putting yourself up like a show for all the bastards in this town to see? For all the sons of bitches to know they brought you down like this? For all of them to gloat?"

Roark laughed.

"I don't give a damn about that, Mike. Why should you?"

"Well, I'm not letting you. I'm not giving the sons of bitches that kinda treat."

"Mike," Roark said softly, "there's nothing else for me to do."

"Hell, yes, there is. I told you before. You'll be listening to reason now. I got all the dough you need until..."

"I'll tell you what I've told Austen Heller: If you ever offer me money again, that'll be the end between us."

"But why?"

"Don't argue, Mike."

"But..."

"I'm asking you to do me a bigger favor. I want that job. You don't have to feel

sorry for me. I don't."

"But...but what'll happen to you, Red?"

"Where?"

"I mean...your future?"

"I'll save enough money and I'll come back. Or maybe someone will send for me before then."

Mike looked at him. He saw something in Roark's eyes which he knew Roark did not want to be there.

"Okay, Red," said Mike softly.

He thought it over for a long time. He said:

"Listen, Red, I won't get you a job in town. I just can't. It turns my stomach to think of it. But I'll get you something in the same line."

"All right. Anything. It doesn't make any difference to me."

"I've worked for all of that bastard Francon's pet contractors for so long I know everybody ever worked for him. He's got a granite quarry down in Connecticut. One of the foremen's a great pal of mine. He's in town right now. Ever worked in a quarry before?"

"Once. Long ago."

"Think you'll like that?"

"Sure."

"I'll go see him. We won't be telling him who you are, just a friend of mine, that's all."

"Thanks, Mike."

Mike reached for his coat, and then his hands fell back, and he looked at the floor.

"Red..."

"It will be all right, Mike."

Roark walked home. It was dark and the street was deserted. There was a strong wind. He could feel the cold, whistling pressure strike his cheeks. It was the only evidence of the flow ripping the air. Nothing moved in the stone corridor about him. There was not a tree to stir, no curtains, no awnings; only naked masses of stone, glass, asphalt and sharp corners. It was strange to feel that fierce movement against his face. But in a trash basket on a corner a crumpled sheet of newspaper was rustling, beating convulsively against the wire mesh. It made the wind real.

#

In the evening, two days later, Roark left for Connecticut.

From the train, he looked back once at the skyline of the city as it flashed

into sight and was held for some moments beyond the windows. The twilight had washed off the details of the buildings. They rose in thin shafts of a soft, porcelain blue, a color not of real things, but of evening and distance. They rose in bare outlines, like empty molds waiting to be filled. The distance had flattened the city. The single shafts stood immeasurably tall, out of scale to the rest of the earth. They were of their own world, and they held up to the sky the statement of what man had conceived and made possible. They were empty molds. But man had come so far; he could go farther. The city on the edge of the sky held a question--and a promise.

#

Little pinheads of light flared up about the peak of one famous tower, in the windows of the Star Roof Restaurant. Then the train swerved around a bend and the city vanished.

That evening, in the banquet hall of the Star Roof Restaurant, a dinner was held to celebrate the admittance of Peter Keating to partnership in the firm to be known henceforward as Francon & Keating.

At the long table that seemed covered, not with a tablecloth, but with a sheet of light, sat Guy Francon. Somehow, tonight, he did not mind the streaks of silver that appeared on his temples; they sparkled crisply against the black of his hair and they gave him an air of cleanliness and elegance, like the rigid white of his shirt against his black evening clothes. In the place of honor sat Peter Keating. He leaned back, his shoulders straight, his hand closed about the stem of a glass. His black curls glistened against his white forehead. In that one moment of silence, the guests felt no envy, no resentment, no malice. There was a grave feeling of brotherhood in the room, in the presence of the pale, handsome boy who looked solemn as at his first communion. Ralston Holcombe had risen to speak. He stood, his glass in hand. He had prepared his speech, but he was astonished to hear himself saying something quite different, in a voice of complete sincerity. He said:

"We are the guardians of a great human function. Perhaps of the greatest function among the endeavors of man. We have achieved much and we have erred often. But we are willing in all humility to make way for our heirs. We are only men and we are only seekers. But we seek for truth with the best there is in our hearts. We seek with what there is of the sublime granted to the race of men. It is a great quest. To the future of American Architecture!"

Part Two: ELLSWORTH M. TOOHEY

1.

TO HOLD his fists closed tight, as if the skin of his palms had grown fast to the steel he clasped--to keep his feet steady, pressed down hard, the flat rock an upward thrust against his soles--not to feel the existence of his body, but only a few clots of tension: his knees, his wrists, his shoulders and the drill he held--to feel the drill trembling in a long convulsive shudder--to feel his stomach trembling, his lungs trembling, the straight lines of the stone ledges before him dissolving into jagged streaks of trembling--to feel the drill and his body gathered into the single will of pressure, that a shaft of steel might sink slowly into granite--this was all of life for Howard Roark, as it had been

in the days of the two months behind him.

He stood on the hot stone in the sun. His face was scorched to bronze. His shirt stuck in long, damp patches to his back. The quarry rose about him in flat shelves breaking against one another. It was a world without curves, grass or soil, a simplified world of stone planes, sharp edges and angles. The stone had not been made by patient centuries welding the sediment of winds and tides; it had come from a molten mass cooling slowly at unknown depth; it had been flung, forced out of the earth, and it still held the shape of violence against the violence of the men on its ledges.

The straight planes stood witness to the force of each cut; the drive of each blow had run in an unswerving line; the stone had cracked open in unbending resistance. Drills bored forward with a low, continuous drone, the tension of the sound cutting through nerves, through skulls, as if the quivering tools were shattering slowly both the stone and the men who held them.

He liked the work. He felt at times as if it were a match of wrestling between his muscles and the granite. He was very tired at night. He liked the emptiness of his body's exhaustion.

Each evening he walked the two miles from the quarry to the little town where the workers lived. The earth of the woods he crossed was soft and warm under his feet; it was strange, after a day spent on the granite ridges; he smiled as at a new pleasure, each evening, and looked down to watch his feet crushing a surface that responded, gave way and conceded faint prints to be left behind.

There was a bathroom in the garret of the house where he roomed; the paint had peeled off the floor long ago and the naked boards were gray-white. He lay in the tub for a long time and let the cool water soak the stone dust out of his skin. He let his head hang back, on the edge of the tub, his eyes closed. The greatness of the weariness was its own relief: it allowed no sensation but the slow pleasure of the tension leaving his muscles.

He ate his dinner in a kitchen, with other quarry workers. He sat alone at a table in a corner; the fumes of the grease, crackling eternally on the vast gas range, hid the rest of the room in a sticky haze. He ate little. He drank a great deal of water; the cold, glittering liquid in a clean glass was intoxicating.

He slept in a small wooden cube under the roof. The boards of the ceiling slanted down over his bed. When it rained, he could hear the burst of each drop against the roof, and it took an effort to realize why he did not feel the rain beating against his body.

Sometimes, after dinner, he would walk into the woods that began behind the house. He would stretch down on the ground, on his stomach, his elbows planted before him, his hands propping his chin, and he would watch the patterns of veins on the green blades of grass under his face; he would blow at them and watch the blades tremble then stop again. He would roll over on his back and lie still, feeling the warmth of the earth under him. Far above, the leaves were still green, but it was a thick, compressed green, as if the color were condensed in one last effort before the dusk coming to dissolve it. The leaves hung without motion against a sky of polished lemon yellow; its luminous pallor emphasized that its light was failing. He pressed his hips, his back into the earth under him; the earth resisted, but it gave way; it was a silent victory; he felt a dim, sensuous pleasure in the muscles of his legs.

Sometimes, not often, he sat up and did not move for a long time; then he

smiled, the slow smile of an executioner watching a victim. He thought of his days going by, of the buildings he could have been doing, should have been doing and, perhaps, never would be doing again. He watched the pain's unsummoned appearance with a cold, detached curiosity; he said to himself: Well, here it is again. He waited to see how long it would last. It gave him a strange, hard pleasure to watch his fight against it, and he could forget that it was his own suffering; he could smile in contempt, not realizing that he smiled at his own agony. Such moments were rare. But when they came, he felt as he did in the quarry: that he had to drill through granite, that he had to drive a wedge and blast the thing within him which persisted in calling to his pity.

#

Dominique Francon lived alone, that summer, in the great Colonial mansion of her father's estate, three miles beyond the quarry town. She received no visitors. An old caretaker and his wife were the only human beings she saw, not too often and merely of necessity; they lived some distance from the mansion, near the stables; the caretaker attended to the grounds and the horses; his wife attended to the house and cooked Dominique's meals.

The meals were served with the gracious severity the old woman had learned in the days when Dominique's mother lived and presided over the guests in that great dining room. At night Dominique found her solitary place at the table laid out as for a formal banquet, the candles lighted, the tongues of yellow flame standing motionless like the shining metal spears of a guard of honor. The darkness stretched the room into a hall, the big windows rose like a flat colonnade of sentinels. A shallow crystal bowl stood in a pool of light in the center of the long table, with a single water lily spreading white petals about a heart yellow like a drop of candle fire.

The old woman served the meal in unobtrusive silence, and disappeared from the house as soon as she could afterward. When Dominique walked up the stairs to her bedroom, she found the fragile lace folds of her nightgown laid out on the bed. In the morning she entered her bathroom and found water in the sunken bathtub, the hyacinth odor of her bath sails, the aquamarine tiles polished, shining under her feet, her huge towels spread out like snowdrifts to swallow her body--yet she heard no steps and felt no living presence in the house. The old woman's treatment of Dominique had the same reverent caution with which she handled the pieces of Venetian glass in the drawing-room cabinets. Dominique had spent so many summers and winters, surrounding herself with people in order to feel alone, that the experiment of actual solitude was an enchantment to her and a betrayal into a weakness she had never allowed herself: the weakness of enjoying it. She stretched her arms and let them drop lazily, feeling a sweet, drowsy heaviness above her elbows, as after a first drink. She was conscious of her summer dresses, she felt her knees, her thighs encountering the faint resistance of cloth when she moved, and it made her conscious not of the cloth, but of her knees and thighs.

The house stood alone amidst vast grounds, and the woods stretched beyond; there were no neighbors for miles. She rode on horseback down long, deserted roads, down hidden paths leading nowhere. Leaves glittered in the sun and twigs snapped in the wind of her flying passage. She caught her breath at times from the sudden feeling that something magnificent and deadly would meet her beyond the next turn of the road; she could give no identity to what she expected, she could not say whether it was a sight, a person or an event; she knew only its quality--the sensation of a defiling pleasure.

Sometimes she started on foot from the house and walked for miles, setting herself no goal and no hour of return. Cars passed her on the road; the people of the quarry town knew her and bowed to her; she was considered the chatelaine

of the countryside, as her mother had been long ago. She turned off the road into the woods and walked on, her arms swinging loosely, her head thrown back, watching the tree tops. She saw clouds swimming behind the leaves; it looked as if a giant tree before her were moving, slanting, ready to fall and crush her; she stopped; she waited, her head thrown back, her throat pulled tight; she felt as if she wanted to be crushed. Then she shrugged and went on. She flung thick branches impatiently out of her way and let them scratch her bare arms. She walked on long after she was exhausted, she drove herself forward against the weariness of her muscles. Then she fell down on her back and lay still, her arms and legs flung out like a cross on the ground, breathing in release, feeling empty and flattened, feeling the weight of the air like a pressure against her breasts.

Some mornings, when she awakened in her bedroom, she heard the explosions of blasting at the granite quarry. She stretched, her arms flung back above her head on the white silk pillow, and she listened. It was the sound of destruction and she liked it.

#

Because the sun was too hot, that morning, and she knew it would be hotter at the granite quarry, because she wanted to see no one and knew she would face a gang of workers, Dominique walked to the quarry. The thought of seeing it on that blazing day was revolting; she enjoyed the prospect.

When she came out of the woods to the edge of the great stone bowl, she felt as if she were thrust into an execution chamber filled with scalding steam. The heat did not come from the sun, but from that broken cut in the earth, from the reflectors of flat ridges. Her shoulders, her head, her back, exposed to the sky, seemed cool while she felt the hot breath of the stone rising up her legs, to her chin, to her nostrils. The air shimmered below, sparks of fire shot through the granite; she thought the stone was stirring, melting, running in white trickles of lava. Drills and hammers cracked the still weight of the air. It was obscene to see men on the shelves of the furnace. They did not look like workers, they looked like a chain gang serving an unspeakable penance for some unspeakable crime. She could not turn away.

She stood, as an insult to the place below. Her dress--the color of water, a pale green-blue, too simple and expensive, its pleats exact like edges of glass--her thin heels planted wide apart on the boulders, the smooth helmet of her hair, the exaggerated fragility of her body against the sky--flaunted the fastidious coolness of the gardens and drawing rooms from which she came.

She looked down. Her eyes stopped on the orange hair of a man who raised his head and looked at her.

She stood very still, because her first perception was not of sight, but of touch: the consciousness, not of a visual presence, but of a slap in the face. She held one hand awkwardly away from her body, the fingers spread wide on the air, as against a wall. She knew that she could not move until he permitted her to.

She saw his mouth and the silent contempt in the shape of his mouth; the planes of his gaunt, hollow cheeks; the cold, pure brilliance of the eyes that had no trace of pity. She knew it was the most beautiful face she would ever see, because it was the abstraction of strength made visible. She felt a convulsion of anger, of protest, of resistance--and of pleasure. He stood looking up at her; it was not a glance, but an act of ownership. She thought she must let her face give him the answer he deserved. But she was looking, instead, at the stone dust on his burned arms, the wet shirt clinging to his ribs, the lines of his

long legs. She was thinking of those statues of men she had always sought; she was wondering what he would look like naked. She saw him looking at her as if he knew that. She thought she had found an aim in life--a sudden, sweeping hatred for that man.

She was first to move. She turned and walked away from him. She saw the superintendent of the quarry on the path ahead, and she waved. The superintendent rushed forward to meet her. "Why, Miss Francon!" he cried. "Why, how do you do, Miss Francon!"

She hoped the words were heard by the man below. For the first time in her life, she was glad of being Miss Francon, glad of her father's position and possessions, which she had always despised. She thought suddenly that the man below was only a common worker, owned by the owner of this place, and she was almost the owner of this place.

The superintendent stood before her respectfully. She smiled and said:

"I suppose I'll inherit the quarry some day, so I thought I should show some interest in it once in a while."

The superintendent preceded her down the path, displayed his domain to her, explained the work. She followed him far to the other side of the quarry; she descended to the dusty green dell of the work sheds; she inspected the bewildering machinery. She allowed a convincingly sufficient time to elapse. Then she walked back, alone, down the edge of the granite bowl.

She saw him from a distance as she approached. He was working. She saw one strand of red hair that fell over his face and swayed with the trembling of the drill. She thought--hopefully--that the vibrations of the drill hurt him, hurt his body, everything inside his body.

When she was on the rocks above him, he raised his head and looked at her; she had not caught him noticing her approach; he looked up as if he expected her to be there, as if he knew she would be back. She saw the hint of a smile, more insulting than words. He sustained the insolence of looking straight at her, he would not move, he would not grant the concession of turning away--of acknowledging that he had no right to look at her in such manner. He had not merely taken that right, he was saying silently that she had given it to him.

She turned sharply and walked on, down the rocky slope, away from the quarry.

#

It was not his eyes, not his mouth that she remembered, but his hands. The meaning of that day seemed held in a single picture she had noted: the simple instant of his one hand resting against granite. She saw it again: his fingertips pressed to the stone, his long fingers continuing the straight lines of the tendons that spread in a fan from his wrist to his knuckles. She thought of him, but the vision present through all her thoughts was the picture of that hand on the granite. It frightened her; she could not understand it.

He's only a common worker, she thought, a hired man doing a convict's labor. She thought of that, sitting before the glass shelf of her dressing table. She looked at the crystal objects spread before her; they were like sculptures in ice--they proclaimed her own cold, luxurious fragility; and she thought of his strained body, of his clothes drenched in dust and sweat, of his hands. She stressed the contrast, because it degraded her. She leaned back, closing her eyes. She thought of the many distinguished men whom she had refused. She thought of the quarry worker. She thought of being broken--not by a man she

admired, but by a man she loathed. She let her head fall down on her arm; the thought left her weak with pleasure.

For two days she made herself believe that she would escape from this place; she found old travel folders in her trunk, studied them, chose the resort, the hotel and the particular room in that hotel, selected the train she would take, the boat and the number of the stateroom. She found a vicious amusement in doing that, because she knew she would not take this trip she wanted; she would go back to the quarry.

She went back to the quarry three days later. She stopped over the ledge where he worked and she stood watching him openly. When he raised his head, she did not turn away. Her glance told him she knew the meaning of her action, but did not respect him enough to conceal it. His glance told her only that he had expected her to come. He bent over his drill and went on with his work. She waited. She wanted him to look up. She knew that he knew it. He would not look again.

She stood, watching his hands, waiting for the moments when he touched stone. She forgot the drill and the dynamite. She liked to think of the granite being broken by his hands.

She heard the superintendent calling her name, hurrying to her up the path. She turned to him when he approached.

"I like to watch the men working," she explained.

"Yes, quite a picture, isn't it?" the superintendent agreed. "There's the train starting over there with another load."

She was not watching the train. She saw the man below looking at her, she saw the insolent hint of amusement tell her that he knew she did not want him to look at her now. She turned her head away. The superintendent's eyes traveled over the pit and stopped on the man below them.

"Hey, you down there!" he shouted. "Are you paid to work or to gape?"

The man bent silently over his drill. Dominique laughed aloud.

The superintendent said: "It's a tough crew we got down here, Miss Francon....Some of 'em even with jail records."

"Has that man a jail record?" she asked, pointing down.

"Well, I couldn't say. Wouldn't know them all by sight."

She hoped he had. She wondered whether they whipped convicts nowadays. She hoped they did. At the thought of it, she felt a sinking gasp such as she had felt in childhood, in dreams of falling down a long stairway; but she felt the sinking in her stomach.

She turned brusquely and left the quarry.

She came back many days later. She saw him, unexpectedly, on a flat stretch of stone before her, by the side of the path. She stopped short. She did not want to come too close. It was strange to see him before her, without the defense and excuse of distance.

He stood looking straight at her. Their understanding was too offensively

intimate, because they had never said a word to each other. She destroyed it by speaking to him.

"Why do you always stare at me?" she asked sharply.

She thought with relief that words were the best means of estrangement. She had denied everything they both knew by naming it. For a moment, he stood silently, looking at her. She felt terror at the thought that he would not answer, that he would let his silence tell her too clearly why no answer was necessary. But he answered. He said:

"For the same reason you've been staring at me."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"If you didn't, you'd be much more astonished and much less angry, Miss Francon."

"So you know my name?"

"You've been advertising it loudly enough."

"You'd better not be insolent. I can have you fired at a moment's notice, you know."

He turned his head, looking for someone among the men below. He asked: "Shall I call the superintendent?"

She smiled contemptuously.

"No, of course not. It would be too simple. But since you know who I am, it would be better if you stopped looking at me when I come here. It might be misunderstood."

"I don't think so."

She turned away. She had to control her voice. She looked over the stone ledges. She asked: "Do you find it very hard to work here?"

"Yes. Terribly."

"Do you get tired?"

"Inhumanly."

"How does that feel?"

"I can hardly walk when the day's ended. I can't move my arms at night. When I lie in bed, I can count every muscle in my body to the number of separate, different pains."

She knew suddenly that he was not telling her about himself; he was speaking of her, he was saying the things she wanted to hear and telling her that he knew why she wanted to hear these particular sentences.

She felt anger, a satisfying anger because it was cold and certain. She felt also a desire to let her skin touch his; to let the length of her bare arm press against the length of his; just that; the desire went no further.,

She was asking calmly:

"You don't belong here, do you? You don't talk like a worker. What were you before?"

"An electrician. A plumber. A plasterer. Many things."

"Why are you working here?"

"For the money you're paying me, Miss Francon."

She shrugged. She turned and walked away from him up the path. She knew that he was looking after her. She did not glance back. She continued on her way through the quarry, and she left it as soon as she could, but she did not go back down the path where she would have to see him again.

2.

DOMINIQUE awakened each morning to the prospect of a day made significant by the existence of a goal to be reached: the goal of making it a day on which she would not go to the quarry.

She had lost the freedom she loved. She knew that a continuous struggle against the compulsion of a single desire was compulsion also, but it was the form she preferred to accept. It was the only manner in which she could let him motivate her life. She found a dark satisfaction in pain--because that pain came from him.

She went to call on the distant neighbors, a wealthy, gracious family who had bored her in New York; she had visited no one all summer. They were astonished and delighted to see her. She sat among a group of distinguished people at the edge of a swimming pool. She watched the air of fastidious elegance around her. She watched the deference of these people's manner when they spoke to her. She glanced at her own reflection in the pool: she looked more delicately austere than any among them.

And she thought, with a vicious thrill, of what these people would do if they read her mind in this moment; if they knew that she was thinking of a man in a quarry, thinking of his body with a sharp intimacy as one does not think of another's body but only of one's own. She smiled; the cold purity of her face prevented them from seeing the nature of that smile. She came back again to visit these people--for the sake of such thoughts in the presence of their respect for her.

One evening, a guest offered to drive her back to her house. He was an eminent young poet. He was pale and slender; he had a soft, sensitive mouth, and eyes hurt by the whole universe. She had not noticed the wistful attention with which he had watched her for a long time. As they drove through the twilight she saw him leaning hesitantly closer to her. She heard his voice whispering the pleading, incoherent things she had heard from many men. He stopped the car. She felt his lips pressed to her shoulder.

She jerked away from him. She sat still for an instant, because she would have to brush against him if she moved and she could not bear to touch him. Then she flung the door open, she leaped out, she slammed the door behind her as if the crash of sound could wipe him out of existence, and she ran blindly. She stopped running after a while, and she walked on shivering, walked down the dark road

until she saw the roof line of her own house.

She stopped, looking about her with her first coherent thought of astonishment. Such incidents had happened to her often in the past; only then she had been amused; she had felt no revulsion; she had felt nothing.

She walked slowly across the lawn, to the house. On the stairs to her room she stopped. She thought of the man in the quarry. She thought, in clear, formed words, that the man in the quarry wanted her. She had known it before; she had known it with his first glance at her. But she had never stated the knowledge to herself.

She laughed. She looked about her, at the silent splendor of her house. The house made the words preposterous. She knew that would never happen to her. And she knew the kind of suffering she could impose on him.

For days she walked with satisfaction through the rooms of her house. It was her defense. She heard the explosions of blasting from the quarry and smiled.

But she felt too certain and the house was too safe. She felt a desire to underscore the safety by challenging it.

She chose the marble slab in front of the fireplace in her bedroom. She wanted it broken. She knelt, hammer in hand, and tried to smash the marble. She pounded it, her thin arm sweeping high over her head, crashing down with ferocious helplessness. She felt the pain in the bones of her arms, in her shoulder sockets. She succeeded in making a long scratch across the marble.

She went to the quarry. She saw him from a distance and walked straight to him.

"Hello," she said casually.

He stopped the drill. He leaned against a stone shelf. He answered:

"Hello."

"I have been thinking of you," she said softly, and stopped, then added, her voice flowing on in the same tone of compelling invitation, "because there's a bit of a dirty job to be done at my house. Would you like to make some extra money?"

"Certainly, Miss Francon."

"Will you come to my house tonight? The way to the servants' entrance is off Ridgewood Road. There's a marble piece at a fireplace that's broken and has to be replaced. I want you to take it out and order a new one made for me."

She expected anger and refusal. He asked:

"What time shall I come?"

"At seven o'clock. What are you paid here?"

"Sixty-two cents an hour."

"I'm sure you're worth that. I'm quite willing to pay you at the same rate. Do you know how to find my house?"

"No, Miss Francon."

"Just ask anyone in the village to direct you."

"Yes, Miss Francon."

She walked away, disappointed. She felt that their secret understanding was lost; he had spoken as if it were a simple job which she could have offered to any other workman. Then she felt the sinking gasp inside, that feeling of shame and pleasure which he always gave her: she realized that their understanding had been more intimate and flagrant than ever--in his natural acceptance of an unnatural offer; he had shown her how much he knew--by his lack of astonishment.

She asked her old caretaker and his wife to remain in the house that evening. Their diffident presence completed the picture of a feudal mansion. She heard the bell of the servants' entrance at seven o'clock. The old woman escorted him to the great front hall where Dominique stood on the landing of a broad stairway.

She watched him approaching, looking up at her. She held the pose long enough to let him suspect that it was a deliberate pose deliberately planned; she broke it at the exact moment before he could become certain of it. She said: "Good evening." Her voice was austere quiet.

He did not answer, but inclined his head and walked on up the stairs toward her. He wore his work clothes and he carried a bag of tools. His movements had a swift, relaxed kind of energy that did not belong here, in her house, on the polished steps, between the delicate, rigid banisters. She had expected him to seem incongruous in her house; but it was the house that seemed incongruous around him.

She moved one hand, indicating the door of her bedroom. He followed obediently. He did not seem to notice the room when he entered. He entered it as if it were a workshop. He walked straight to the fireplace.

"There it is," she said, one finger pointing to the marble slab.

He said nothing. He knelt, took a thin metal wedge from his bag, held its point against the scratch on the slab, took a hammer and struck one blow. The marble split in a long, deep cut.

He glanced up at her. It was the look she dreaded, a look of laughter that could not be answered, because the laughter could not be seen, only felt. He said:

"Now it's broken and has to be replaced."

She asked calmly:

"Would you know what kind of marble this is and where to order another piece like it?"

"Yes, Miss Francon."

"Go ahead, then. Take it out."

"Yes, Miss Francon."

She stood watching him. It was strange to feel a senseless necessity to watch the mechanical process of the work as if her eyes were helping it. Then she knew that she was afraid to look at the room around them. She made herself raise her

head.

She saw the shelf of her dressing table, its glass edge like a narrow green satin ribbon in the semidarkness, and the crystal containers; she saw a pair of white bedroom slippers, a pale blue towel on the floor by a mirror, a pair of stockings thrown over the arm of a chair; she saw the white satin cover of her bed. His shirt had damp stains and gray patches of stone dust; the dust made streaks on the skin of his arms. She felt as if each object in the room had been touched by him, as if the air were a heavy pool of water into which they had been plunged together, and the water that touched him carried the touch to her, to every object in the room. She wanted him to look up. He worked, without raising his head.

She approached him and stood silently over him. She had never stood so close to him before. She looked down at the smooth skin on the back of his neck; she could distinguish single threads of his hair. She glanced down at the tip of her sandal. It was there, on the floor, an inch away from his body; she needed but one movement, a very slight movement of her foot, to touch him. She made a step back.

He moved his head, but not to look up, only to pick another tool from the bag, and bent over his work again.

She laughed aloud. He stopped and glanced at her.

"Yes?" he asked.

Her face was grave, her voice gentle when she answered:

"Oh, I'm sorry. You might have thought that I was laughing at you. But I wasn't, of course."

She added:

"I didn't want to disturb you. I'm sure you're anxious to finish and get out of here. I mean, of course, because you must be tired. But then, on the other hand, I'm paying you by the hour, so it's quite all right if you stretch your time a little, if you want to make more out of it. There must be things you'd like to talk about."

"Oh, yes, Miss Francon."

"Well?"

"I think this is an atrocious fireplace."

"Really? This house was designed by my father."

"Yes, of course, Miss Francon."

"There's no point in your discussing the work of an architect."

"None at all."

"Surely we could choose some other subject."

"Yes, Miss Francon."

She moved away from him. She sat down on the bed, leaning back on straight arms,

her legs crossed and pressed close together in a long, straight line. Her body, sagging limply from her shoulders, contradicted the inflexible precision of the legs; the cold austerity of her face contradicted the pose of her body.

He glanced at her occasionally, as he worked. He was speaking obediently. He was saying:

"I shall make certain to get a piece of marble of precisely the same quality, Miss Francon. It is very important to distinguish between the various kinds of marble. Generally speaking, there are three kinds. The white marbles, which are derived from the recrystallization of limestone, the onyx marbles which are chemical deposits of calcium carbonate, and the green marbles which consist mainly of hydrous magnesium silicate or serpentine. This last must not be considered as true marble. True marble is a metamorphic form of limestone, produced by heat and pressure. Pressure is a powerful factor. It leads to consequences which, once started, cannot be controlled."

"What consequences?" she asked, leaning forward.

"The recrystallization of the particles of limestone and the infiltration of foreign elements from the surrounding soil. These constitute the colored streaks which are to be found in most marbles. Pink marble is caused by the presence of manganese oxides, gray marble is due to carbonaceous matter, yellow marble is attributed to a hydrous oxide of iron. This piece here is, of course, white marble. There are a great many varieties of white marble. You should be very careful, Miss Francon..."

She sat leaning forward, gathered into a dim black huddle; the lamp light fell on one hand she had dropped limply on her knees, palm up, the fingers half-closed, a thin edge of fire outlining each finger, the dark cloth of her dress making the hand too naked and brilliant.

"...to make certain that I order a new piece of precisely the same quality. It would not be advisable, for instance, to substitute a piece of white Georgia marble which is not as fine-grained as the white marble of Alabama. This is Alabama marble. Very high grade. Very expensive."

He saw her hand close and drop down, out of the light. He continued his work in silence.

When he had finished, he rose, asking:

"Where shall I put the stone?"

"Leave it there. I'll have it removed."

"I'll order a new piece cut to measure and delivered to you C.O.D. Do you wish me to set it?"

"Yes, certainly. I'll let you know when it comes. How much do I owe you?" She glanced at a clock on her bedside table. "Let me see, you've been here three quarters of an hour. That's forty-eight cents." She reached for her bag, she took out the dollar bill, she handed it to him. "Keep the change," she said.

She hoped he would throw it back in her face. He slipped the bill into his pocket. He said:

"Thank you, Miss Francon."

He saw the edge of her long black sleeve trembling over her closed fingers.

"Good night," she said, her voice hollow in anger.

He bowed: "Good night, Miss Francon."

He turned and walked down the stairs, out of the house.

She stopped thinking of him. She thought of the piece of marble he had ordered. She waited for it to come, with the feverish intensity of a sudden mania; she counted the days; she watched the rare trucks on the road beyond the lawn.

She told herself fiercely that she merely wanted the marble to come; just that; nothing else, no hidden reasons; no reasons at all. It was a last, hysterical aftermath; she was free of everything else. The stone would come and that would be the end.

When the stone came, she barely glanced at it. The delivery truck had not left the grounds, when she was at her desk, writing a note on a piece of exquisite stationery. She wrote:

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"The marble is here. I want it set tonight."

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She sent her caretaker with the note to the quarry. She ordered it delivered to: "I don't know his name. The redheaded workman who was here."

The caretaker came back and brought her a scrap torn from a brown paper bag, bearing in pencil:

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"You'll have it set tonight."

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She waited, in the suffocating emptiness of impatience, at the window of her bedroom. The servants' entrance bell rang at seven o'clock. There was a knock at her door. "Come in," she snapped--to hide the strange sound of her own voice. The door opened and the caretaker's wife entered, motioning for someone to follow. The person who followed was a short, squat, middle-aged Italian with bow legs, a gold hoop in one ear and a frayed hat held respectfully in both hands.

"The man sent from the quarry, Miss Francon," said the caretaker's wife.

Dominique asked, her voice not a scream and not a question:

"Who are you?"

"Pasquale Orsini," the man answered obediently, bewildered.

"What do you want?"

"Well, I...Well, Red down at the quarry said fireplace gotta be fixed, he said you wanta I fix her."

"Yes. Yes, of course," she said, rising. "I forgot. Go ahead."

She had to get out of the room. She had to run, not to be seen by anyone, not to be seen by herself if she could escape it.

She stopped somewhere in the garden and stood trembling, pressing her fists against her eyes. It was anger. It was a pure, single emotion that swept everything clean; everything but the terror under the anger; terror, because she knew that she could not go near the quarry now and that she would go.

It was early evening, many days later, when she went to the quarry. She returned on horseback from a long ride through the country, and she saw the shadows lengthening on the lawn; she knew that she could not live through another night. She had to get there before the workers left. She wheeled about. She rode to the quarry, flying, the wind cutting her cheeks.

He was not there when she reached the quarry. She knew at once that he was not there, even though the workers were just leaving and a great many of them were filling down the paths from the stone bowl. She stood, her lips tight, and she looked for him. But she knew that he had left.

She rode into the woods. She flew at random between walls of leaves that melted ahead in the gathering twilight. She stopped, broke a long, thin branch off a tree, tore the leaves off, and went on, using the flexible stick as a whip, lashing her horse to fly faster. She felt as if the speed would hasten the evening on, force the hours ahead to pass more quickly, let her leap across time to catch the coming morning before it came. And then she saw him walking alone on the path before her.

She tore ahead. She caught up with him and stopped sharply, the jolt throwing her forward then back like the release of a spring. He stopped.

They said nothing. They looked at each other. She thought that every silent instant passing was a betrayal; this wordless encounter was too eloquent, this recognition that no greeting was necessary.

She asked, her voice flat:

"Why didn't you come to set the marble?"

"I didn't think it would make any difference to you who came. Or did it, Miss Francon?"

She felt the words not as sounds, but as a blow flat against her mouth. The branch she held went up and slashed across his face. She started off in the sweep of the same motion.

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Dominique sat at the dressing table in her bedroom. It was very late. There was no sound in the vast, empty house around her. The french windows of the bedroom were open on a terrace and there was no sound of leaves in the dark garden beyond.

The blankets on her bed were turned down, waiting for her, the pillow white against the tall, black windows. She thought she would try to sleep. She had not seen him for three days. She ran her hands over her head, the curves of her palms pressing against the smooth planes of hair. She pressed her fingertips, wet with perfume, to the hollows of her temples, and held them there for a moment; she felt relief in the cold, contracting bite of the liquid on her skin. A spilled drop of perfume remained on the glass of the dressing table, a drop sparkling like a gem and as expensive.

She did not hear the sound of steps in the garden. She heard them only when they

rose up the stairs to the terrace. She sat up, frowning. She looked at the french windows.

He came in. He wore his work clothes, the dirty shirt with rolled sleeves, the trousers smeared with stone dust. He stood looking at her. There was no laughing understanding in his face. His face was drawn, austere in cruelty, ascetic in passion, the cheeks sunken, the lips pulled down, set tight. She jumped to her feet, she stood, her arms thrown back, her fingers spread apart. He did not move. She saw a vein of his neck rise, beating, and fall down again.

Then he walked to her. He held her as if his flesh had cut through hers and she felt the bones of his arms on the bones of her ribs, her legs jerked tight against his, his mouth on hers.

She did not know whether the jolt of terror shook her first and she thrust her elbows at his throat, twisting her body to escape, or whether she lay still in his arms, in the first instant, in the shock of feeling his skin against hers, the thing she had thought about, had expected, had never known to be like this, could not have known, because this was not part of living, but a thing one could not bear longer than a second.

She tried to tear herself away from him. The effort broke against his arms that had not felt it. Her fists beat against his shoulders, against his face. He moved one hand, took her two wrists, pinned them behind her, under his arm, wrenching her shoulder blades. She twisted her head back. She felt his lips on her breast. She tore herself free.

She fell back against the dressing table, she stood crouching, her hands clasping the edge behind her, her eyes wide, colorless, shapeless in terror. He was laughing. There was the movement of laughter on his face, but no sound. Perhaps he had released her intentionally. He stood, his legs apart, his arms hanging at his sides, letting her be more sharply aware of his body across the space between them than she had been in his arms. She looked at the door behind him, he saw the first hint of movement, no more than a thought of leaping toward that door. He extended his arm, not touching her, and fell back. Her shoulders moved faintly, rising. He took a step forward and her shoulders fell. She huddled lower, closer to the table. He let her wait. Then he approached. He lifted her without effort. She let her teeth sink into his hand and felt blood on the tip of her tongue. He pulled her head back and he forced her mouth open against his.

She fought like an animal. But she made no sound. She did not call for help. She heard the echoes of her blows in a gasp of his breath, and she knew that it was a gasp of pleasure. She reached for the lamp on the dressing table. He knocked the lamp out of her hand. The crystal burst to pieces in the darkness.

He had thrown her down on the bed and she felt the blood beating in her throat, in her eyes, the hatred, the helpless terror in her blood. She felt the hatred and his hands; his hands moving over her body, the hands that broke granite. She fought in a last convulsion. Then the sudden pain shot up, through her body, to her throat, and she screamed. Then she lay still.

It was an act that could be performed in tenderness, as a seal of love, or in contempt, as a symbol of humiliation and conquest. It could be the act of a lover or the act of a soldier violating an enemy woman. He did it as an act of scorn. Not as love, but as defilement. And this made her lie still and submit. One gesture of tenderness from him--and she would have remained cold, untouched by the thing done to her body. But the act of a master taking shameful, contemptuous possession of her was the kind of rapture she had wanted. Then she

felt him shaking with the agony of a pleasure unbearable even to him, she knew that she had given that to him, that it came from her, from her body, and she bit her lips and she knew what he had wanted her to know.

He lay still across the bed, away from her, his head hanging back over the edge. She heard the slow, ending gasps of his breath. She lay on her back, as he had left her, not moving, her mouth open. She felt empty, light and flat.

She saw him get up. She saw his silhouette against the window. He went out, without a word or a glance at her. She noticed that, but it did not matter. She listened blankly to the sound of his steps moving away in the garden.

She lay still for a long time. Then she moved her tongue in her open mouth. She heard a sound that came from somewhere within her, and it was the dry, short, sickening sound of a sob, but she was not crying, her eyes were held paralyzed, dry and open. The sound became motion, a jolt running down her throat to her stomach. It flung her up, she stood awkwardly, bent over, her forearms pressed to her stomach. She heard the small table by the bed rattling in the darkness, and she looked at it, in empty astonishment that a table should move without reason. Then she understood that she was shaking. She was not frightened; it seemed foolish to shake like that, in short, separate jerks, like soundless hiccoughs. She thought she must take a bath. The need was unbearable, as if she had felt it for a long time. Nothing mattered, if only she would take a bath. She dragged her feet slowly to the door of her bathroom.

She turned the light on in the bathroom. She saw herself in a tall mirror. She saw the purple bruises left on her body by his mouth. She heard a moan muffled in her throat, not very loud. It was not the sight, but the sudden flash of knowledge. She knew that she would not take a bath. She knew that she wanted to keep the feeling of his body, the traces of his body on hers, knowing also what such a desire implied. She fell on her knees, clasping the edge of the bathtub. She could not make herself crawl over that edge. Her hands slipped, she lay still on the floor. The tiles were hard and cold under her body. She lay there till morning.

Roark awakened in the morning and thought that last night had been like a point reached, like a stop in the movement of his life. He was moving forward for the sake of such stops; like the moments when he had walked through the half-finished Heller house; like last night. In some unstated way, last night had been what building was to him; in some quality of reaction within him, in what it gave to his consciousness of existence.

They had been united in an understanding beyond the violence, beyond the deliberate obscenity of his action; had she meant less to him, he would not have taken her as he did; had he meant less to her, she would not have fought so desperately. The unrepeatably exultation was in knowing that they both understood this.

He went to the quarry and he worked that day as usual. She did not come to the quarry and he did not expect her to come. But the thought of her remained. He watched it with curiosity. It was strange to be conscious of another person's existence, to feel it as a close, urgent necessity; a necessity without qualifications, neither pleasant nor painful, merely final like an ultimatum. It was important to know that she existed in the world; it was important to think of her, of how she had awakened this morning, of how she moved, with her body still his, now his forever, of what she thought.

That evening, at dinner in the sooted kitchen, he opened a newspaper and saw the name of Roger Enright in the lines of a gossip column. He read the short

paragraph:

"It looks like another grand project on its way to the wastebasket. Roger Enright, the oil king, seems to be stumped this time. He'll have to call a halt to his latest pipe dream of an Enright House. Architect trouble, we are told. Seems as if half a dozen of the big building boys have been shown the gate by the unsatisfiable Mr. Enright. Top-notchers, all of them."

Roark felt the wrench he had tried so often to fight, not to let it hurt him too much: the wrench of helplessness before the vision of what he could do, what should have been possible and was closed to him. Then, without reason, he thought of Dominique Francon. She had no relation to the things in his mind; he was shocked only to know that she could remain present even among these things.

A week passed. Then, one evening, he found a letter waiting for him at home. It had been forwarded from his former office to his last New York address, from there to Mike, from Mike to Connecticut. The engraved address of an oil company on the envelope meant nothing to him. He opened the letter. He read:

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"Dear Mr. Roark,

"I have been endeavoring for some time to get in touch with you, but have been unable to locate you. Please communicate with me at your earliest convenience. I should like to discuss with you my proposed Enright House, if you are the man who built the Fargo Store.

"Sincerely yours,

"Roger Enright."

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Half an hour later Roark was on a train. When the train started moving, he remembered Dominique and that he was leaving her behind. The thought seemed distant and unimportant. He was astonished only to know that he still thought of her, even now.

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She could accept, thought Dominique, and come to forget in time everything that had happened to her, save one memory: that she had found pleasure in the thing which had happened, that he had known it, and more: that he had known it before he came to her and that he would not have come but for that knowledge. She had not given him the one answer that would have saved her: an answer of simple revulsion--she had found joy in her revulsion, in her terror and in his strength. That was the degradation she had wanted and she hated him for it.

She found a letter one morning, waiting for her on the breakfast table. It was from Alvah Scarret. "...When are you coming back, Dominique? I can't tell you how much we miss you here. You're not a comfortable person to have around, I'm actually scared of you, but I might as well inflate your inflated ego some more, at a distance, and confess that we're all waiting for you impatiently. It will be like the homecoming of an Empress."

She read it and smiled. She thought, if they knew...those people...that old life and that awed reverence before her person...I've been raped...I've been raped by some redheaded hoodlum from a stone quarry...I, Dominique Francon....Through the fierce sense of humiliation, the words gave her the same kind of pleasure she had felt in his arms.

She thought of it when she walked through the countryside, when she passed

people on the road and the people bowed to her, the chatelaine of the town. She wanted to scream it to the hearing of all.

She was not conscious of the days that passed. She felt content in a strange detachment, alone with the words she kept repeating to herself. Then, one morning, standing on the lawn in her garden, she understood that a week had passed and that she had not seen him for a week. She turned and walked rapidly across the lawn to the road. She was going to the quarry.

She walked the miles to the quarry, down the road, bareheaded in the sun. She did not hurry. It was not necessary to hurry. It was inevitable. To see him again....She had no purpose. The need was too great to name a purpose....Afterward...There were other things, hideous, important things behind her and rising vaguely in her mind, but first, above all, just one thing: to see him again...

She came to the quarry and she looked slowly, carefully, stupidly about her, stupidly because the enormity of what she saw would not penetrate her brain: she saw at once that he was not there. The work was in full swing, the sun was high over the busiest hour of the day, there was not an idle man in sight, but he was not among the men. She stood, waiting numbly, for a long time.

Then she saw the foreman and she motioned for him to approach.

"Good afternoon, Miss Francon....Lovely day, Miss Francon, isn't it? Just like the middle of summer again and yet fall's not far away, yes, fall's coming, look at the leaves, Miss Francon."

She asked:

"There was a man you had here...a man with very bright orange hair...where is he?"

"Oh yes. That one. He's gone."

"Gone?"

"Quit. Left for New York, I think. Very suddenly too."

"When? A week ago?"

"Why, no. Just yesterday."

"Who was..."

Then she stopped. She was going to ask: "Who was he?" She asked instead:

"Who was working here so late last night? I heard blasting."

"That was for a special order for Mr. Francon's building. The Cosmo-Slotnick Building, you know. A rash job."

"Yes...I see...."

"Sorry it disturbed you, Miss Francon."

"Oh, not at all...."

She walked away. She would not ask for his name. It was her last chance of

freedom.

She walked swiftly, easily, in sudden relief. She wondered why she had never noticed that she did not know his name and why she had never asked him. Perhaps because she had known everything she had to know about him from that first glance. She thought, one could not find some nameless worker in the city of New York. She was safe. If she knew his name, she would be on her way to New York now.

The future was simple. She had nothing to do except never to ask for his name. She had a reprieve. She had a chance to fight. She would break it--or it would break her. If it did, she would ask for his name.

3.

WHEN Peter Keating entered the office, the opening of the door sounded like a single high blast on a trumpet. The door flew forward as if it had opened of itself to the approach of a man before whom all doors were to open in such manner.

His day in the office began with the newspapers. There was a neat pile of them waiting, stacked on his desk by his secretary. He liked to see what new mentions appeared in print about the progress of the Cosmo-Slotnick Building or the firm of Francon & Keating.

There were no mentions in the papers this morning, and Keating frowned. He saw, however, a story about Ellsworth M. Toohey. It was a startling story. Thomas L. Foster, noted philanthropist, had died and had left, among larger bequests, the modest sum of one hundred thousand dollars to Ellsworth M. Toohey, "my friend and spiritual guide--in appreciation of his noble mind and true devotion to humanity." Ellsworth M. Toohey had accepted the legacy and had turned it over, intact, to the "Workshop of Social Study," a progressive institute of learning where he held the post of lecturer on "Art as a Social Symptom." He had given the simple explanation that he "did not believe in the institution of private inheritance." He had refused all further comment. "No, my friends," he had said, "not about this." And had added, with his charming knack for destroying the earnestness of his own moment: "I like to indulge in the luxury of commenting solely upon interesting subjects. I do not consider myself one of these."

Peter Keating read the story. And because he knew that it was an action which he would never have committed, he admired it tremendously.

Then he thought, with a familiar twinge of annoyance, that he had not been able to meet Ellsworth Toohey. Toohey had left on a lecture tour shortly after the award in the Cosmo-Slotnick competition, and the brilliant gatherings Keating had attended ever since were made empty by the absence of the one man he'd been most eager to meet. No mention of Keating's name had appeared in Toohey's column. Keating turned hopefully, as he did each morning, to "One Small Voice" in the Banner. But "One Small Voice" was subtitled "Songs and Things" today, and was devoted to proving the superiority of folk songs over any other forms of musical art, and of choral singing over any other manner of musical rendition.

Keating dropped the Banner. He got up and paced viciously across the office, because he had to turn now to a disturbing problem. He had been postponing it for several mornings. It was the matter of choosing a sculptor for the Cosmo-Slotnick Building. Months ago the commission for the giant statue of "Industry" to stand in the main lobby of the building had been

awarded--tentatively--to Steven Mallory. The award had puzzled Keating, but it had been made by Mr. Slotnick, so Keating had approved of it. He had interviewed Mallory and said: "...in recognition of your unusual ability...of course you have no name, but you will have, after a commission like this...they don't come every day like this building of mine."

He had not liked Mallory. Mallory's eyes were like black holes left after a fire not quite put out, and Mallory had not smiled once. He was twenty-four years old, had had one show of his work, but not many commissions. His work was strange and too violent. Keating remembered that Ellsworth Toohey had said once, long ago, in "One Small Voice."

"Mr. Mallory's human figures would have been very fine were it not for the hypothesis that God created the world and the human form. Had Mr. Mallory been entrusted with the job, he might, perhaps, have done better than the Almighty, if we are to judge by what he passes as human bodies in stone. Or would he?"

Keating had been baffled by Mr. Slotnick's choice, until he heard that Dimples Williams had once lived in the same Greenwich Village tenement with Steven Mallory, and Mr. Slotnick could refuse nothing to Dimples Williams at the moment. Mallory had been hired, had worked and had submitted a model of his statue of "Industry." When he saw it, Keating knew that the statue would look like a raw gash, like a smear of fire in the neat elegance of his lobby. It was a slender naked body of a man who looked as if he could break through the steel plate of a battleship and through any barrier whatever. It stood like a challenge. It left a strange stamp on one's eyes. It made the people around it seem smaller and sadder than usual. For the first time in his life, looking at that statue, Keating thought he understood what was meant by the word "heroic."

He said nothing. But the model was sent on to Mr. Slotnick and many people said, with indignation, what Keating had felt. Mr. Slotnick asked him to select another sculptor and left the choice in his hands.

Keating flopped down in an armchair, leaned back and clicked his tongue against his palate. He wondered whether he should give the commission to Bronson, the sculptor who was a friend of Mrs. Shupe, wife of the president of Cosmo; or to Palmer, who had been recommended by Mr. Huseby who was planning the erection of a new five-million-dollar cosmetic factory. Keating discovered that he liked this process of hesitation; he held the fate of two men and of many potential others; their fate, their work, their hope, perhaps even the amount of food in their stomachs. He could choose as he pleased, for any reason, without reasons; he could flip a coin, he could count them off on the buttons of his vest. He was a great man--by the grace of those who depended on him.

Then he noticed the envelope.

It lay on top of a pile of letters on his desk. It was a plain, thin, narrow envelope, but it bore the small masthead of the Banner in one corner. He reached for it hastily. It contained no letter; only a strip of proofs for tomorrow's Banner. He saw the familiar "One Small Voice" by Ellsworth M. Toohey, and under it a single word as subtitle, in large, spaced letters, a single word, blatant in its singleness, a salute by dint of omission:

"KEATING"
#

He dropped the paper strip and seized it again and read, choking upon great unchewed hunks of sentences, the paper trembling in his hand, the skin on his forehead drawing into tight pink spots. Toohey had written:

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"Greatness is an exaggeration, and like all exaggerations of dimension it connotes at once the necessary corollary of emptiness. One thinks of an inflated toy balloon, does one not? There are, however, occasions when we are forced to acknowledge the promise of an approach--brilliantly close--to what we designate loosely by the term of greatness. Such a promise is looming on our architectural horizon in the person of a mere boy named Peter Keating.

"We have heard a great deal--and with justice--about the superb Cosmo-Slotnick Building which he has designed. Let us glance, for once, beyond the building, at the man whose personality is stamped upon it.

"There is no personality stamped upon that building--and in this, my friend, lies the greatness of the personality. It is the greatness of a selfless young spirit that assimilates all things and returns them to the world from which they came, enriched by the gentle brilliance of its own talent. Thus a single man comes to represent, not a lone freak, but the multitude of all men together, to embody the reach of all aspirations in his own....

"...Those gifted with discrimination will be able to hear the message which Peter Keating addresses to us in the shape of the Cosmo-Slotnick Building, to see that the three simple, massive ground floors are the solid bulk of our working classes which support all of society; that the rows of identical windows offering their panes to the sun are the souls of the common people, of the countless anonymous ones alike in the uniformity of brotherhood, reaching for the light; that the graceful pilasters rising from their firm base in the ground floors and bursting into the gay effervescence of their Corinthian capitals, are the flowers of Culture which blossom only when rooted in the rich soil of the broad masses....

"...In answer to those who consider all critics as fiends devoted solely to the destruction of sensitive talent, this column wishes to thank Peter Keating for affording us the rare--oh, so rare!--opportunity to prove our delight in our true mission, which is to discover young talent--when it is there to be discovered. And if Pete Keating should chance to read these lines, we expect no gratitude from him. The gratitude is ours."

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It was when Keating began to read the article for the third time that he noticed a few lines written in red pencil across the space by its title:

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"Dear Peter Keating,

"Drop in to see me at my office one of these days. Would love to discover what you look like.

"E.M.T."

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He let the clipping flutter down to his desk, and he stood over it, running a strand of hair between his fingers, in a kind of happy stupor. Then he whirled around to his drawing of the Cosmo-Slotnick Building, that hung on the wall between a huge photograph of the Parthenon and one of the Louvre. He looked at the pilasters of his building. He had never thought of them as Culture flowering from out of the broad masses, but he decided that one could very well think that and all the rest of the beautiful stuff.

Then he seized the telephone, he spoke to a high, flat voice which belonged to

Ellsworth Toohey's secretary, and he made an appointment to see Toohey at four-thirty of the next afternoon.

In the hours that followed, his daily work assumed a new relish. It was as if his usual activity had been only a bright, flat mural and had now become a noble bas-relief, pushed forward, given a three-dimensional reality by the words of Ellsworth Toohey.

Guy Francon descended from his office once in a while, for no ascertainable purpose. The subtler shades of his shirts and socks matched the gray of his temples. He stood smiling benevolently in silence. Keating flashed past him in the drafting room and acknowledged his presence, not stopping, but slowing his steps long enough to plant a crackling bit of newspaper into the folds of the mauve handkerchief in Francon's breast-pocket, with "Read that when you have time, Guy." He added, his steps halfway across the next room: "Want to have lunch with me today, Guy? Wait for me at the Plaza."

When he came back from lunch, Keating was stopped by a young draftsman who asked, his voice high with excitement:

"Say, Mr. Keating, who's it took a shot at Ellsworth Toohey?"

Keating managed to gasp out:

"Who is it did what?"

"Shot Mr. Toohey."

"Who?"

"That's what I want to know, who."

"Shot...Ellsworth Toohey?"

"That's what I saw in the paper in the restaurant a guy had. Didn't have time to get one."

"He's...killed?"

"That's what I don't know. Saw only it said about a shot."

"If he's dead, does that mean they won't publish his column tomorrow?"

"Dunno. Why, Mr. Keating?"

"Go get me a paper."

"But I've got to..."

"Get me that paper, you damned idiot!"

The story was there, in the afternoon papers. A shot had been fired at Ellsworth Toohey that morning, as he stepped out of his car in front of a radio station where he was to deliver an address on "The Voiceless and the Undefended." The shot had missed him. Ellsworth Toohey had remained calm and sane throughout. His behavior had been theatrical only in too complete an absence of anything theatrical. He had said: "We cannot keep a radio audience waiting," and had hurried on upstairs to the microphone where, never mentioning the incident, he delivered a half-hour's speech from memory, as he always did. The assailant had

said nothing when arrested.

Keating stared--his throat dry--at the name of the assailant. It was Steven Mallory.

Only the inexplicable frightened Keating, particularly when the inexplicable lay, not in tangible facts, but in that causeless feeling of dread within him. There was nothing to concern him directly in what had happened, except his wish that it had been someone else, anyone but Steven Mallory; and that he didn't know why he should wish this.

Steven Mallory had remained silent. He had given no explanation of his act. At first, it was supposed that he might have been prompted by despair at the loss of his commission for the Cosmo-Slotnick Building, since it was learned that he lived in revolting poverty. But it was learned, beyond any doubt, that Ellsworth Toohey had had no connection whatever with his loss. Toohey had never spoken to Mr. Slotnick about Steven Mallory. Toohey had not seen the statue of "Industry." On this point Mallory had broken his silence to admit that he had never met Toohey nor seen him in person before, nor known any of Toohey's friends. "Do you think that Mr. Toohey was in some way responsible for your losing that commission?" he was asked. Mallory had answered: "No."

"Then why?" Mallory said nothing.

Toohey had not recognized his assailant when he saw him seized by policemen on the sidewalk outside the radio station. He did not learn his name until after the broadcast. Then, stepping out of the studio into an anteroom full of waiting newsmen, Toohey said: "No, of course I won't press any charges. I wish they'd let him go. Who is he, by the way?" When he heard the name, Toohey's glance remained fixed somewhere between the shoulder of one man and the hat brim of another. Then Toohey--who had stood calmly while a bullet struck an inch from his face against the glass of the entrance door below--uttered one word and the word seemed to fall at his feet, heavy with fear: "Why?"

No one could answer. Presently, Toohey shrugged, smiled, and said: "If it was an attempt at free publicity--well, what atrocious taste!" But nobody believed this explanation, because all felt that Toohey did not believe it either. Through the interviews that followed, Toohey answered questions gaily. He said: "I had never thought myself important enough to warrant assassination. It would be the greatest tribute one could possibly expect--if it weren't so much in the style of an operetta." He managed to convey the charming impression that nothing of importance had happened because nothing of importance ever happened on earth.

Mallory was sent to jail to await trial. All efforts to question him failed.

The thought that kept Keating uneasily awake for many hours, that night, was the groundless certainty that Toohey felt exactly as he did. He knows, thought Keating, and I know, that there is--in Steven Mallory's motive--a greater danger than in his murderous attempt. But we shall never know his motive. Or shall we?...And then he touched the core of fear: it was the sudden wish that he might be guarded, through the years to come, to the end of his life, from ever learning that motive.

#

Ellsworth Toohey's secretary rose in a leisurely manner, when Keating entered, and opened for him the door into Ellsworth Toohey's office.

Keating had grown past the stage of experiencing anxiety at the prospect of meeting a famous man, but he experienced it in the moment when he saw the door

opening under her hand. He wondered what Toohey really looked like. He remembered the magnificent voice he had heard in the lobby of the strike meeting, and he imagined a giant of a man, with a rich mane of hair, perhaps just turning gray, with bold, broad features of an ineffable benevolence, something vaguely like the countenance of God the Father.

"Mr. Peter Keating--Mr. Toohey," said the secretary and closed the door behind him.

At a first glance upon Ellsworth Monkton Toohey one wished to offer him a heavy, well-padded overcoat--so frail and unprotected did his thin little body appear, like that of a chicken just emerging from the egg, in all the sorry fragility of unhardened bones. At a second glance one wished to be sure that the overcoat should be an exceedingly good one--so exquisite were the garments covering that body. The lines of the dark suit followed frankly the shape within it, apologizing for nothing: they sank with the concavity of the narrow chest, they slid down from the long, thin neck with the sharp slope of the shoulders. A great forehead dominated the body. The wedge-shaped face descended from the broad temples to a small, pointed chin. The hair was black, lacquered, divided into equal halves by a thin white line. This made the skull look tight and trim, but left too much emphasis to the ears that flared out in solitary nakedness, like the handles of a bouillon cup. The nose was long and thin, prolonged by the small dab of a black mustache. The eyes were dark and startling. They held such a wealth of intellect and of twinkling gaiety that his glasses seemed to be worn not to protect his eyes but to protect other men from their excessive brilliance.

"Hello, Peter Keating," said Ellsworth Monkton Toohey in his compelling, magical voice. "What do you think of the temple of Nike Apteros?"

"How...do you do, Mr. Toohey," said Keating, stopped, stupefied. "What do I think...of what?"

"Sit down, my friend. Of the temple of Nike Apteros."

"Well...Well...I..."

"I feel certain that you couldn't have overlooked that little gem. The Parthenon has usurped the recognition which--and isn't that usually the case? the bigger and stronger appropriating all the glory, while the beauty of the unprepossessing goes unsung--which should have been awarded to that magnificent little creation of the great free spirit of Greece. You've noted, I'm sure, the fine balance of its mass, the supreme perfection of its modest proportions--ah, yes, you know, the supreme in the modest--the delicate craftsmanship of detail?"

"Yes, of course," muttered Keating, "that's always been my favorite--the temple of Nike Apteros."

"Really?" said Ellsworth Toohey, with a smile which Keating could not quite classify. "I was certain of it. I was certain you'd say it. You have a very handsome face, Peter Keating, when you don't stare like this--which is really quite unnecessary."

And Toohey was laughing suddenly, laughing quite obviously, quite insultingly, at Keating and at himself; it was as if he were underscoring the falseness of the whole procedure. Keating sat aghast for an instant; and then he found himself laughing easily in answer, as if at home with a very old friend.

"That's better," said Toohey. "Don't you find it advisable not to talk too

seriously in an important moment? And this might be a very important moment--who knows?--for both of us. And, of course, I knew you'd be a little afraid of me and--oh, I admit--I was quite a bit afraid of you, so isn't this much better?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Toohey," said Keating happily. His normal assurance in meeting people had vanished; but he felt at ease, as if all responsibility were taken away from him and he did not have to worry about saying the right things, because he was being led gently into saying them without any effort on his part. "I've always known it would be an important moment when I met you, Mr. Toohey. Always. For years."

"Really?" said Ellsworth Toohey, the eyes behind the glasses attentive. "Why?"

"Because I'd always hoped that I would please you, that you'd approve of me...of my work...when the time came...why, I even..."

"Yes?"

"...I even thought, so often, when drawing, is this the kind of building that Ellsworth Toohey would say is good? I tried to see it like that, through your eyes...I...I've..." Toohey listened watchfully. "I've always wanted to meet you because you're such a profound thinker and a man of such cultural distinc--"

"Now," said Toohey, his voice kindly but a little impatient; his interest had dropped on that last sentence. "None of that. I don't mean to be ungracious, but we'll dispense with that sort of thing, shall we? Unnatural as this may sound, I really don't like to hear personal praise."

It was Toohey's eyes, thought Keating, that put him at ease. There was such a vast understanding in Toohey's eyes and such an unfastidious kindness--no, what a word to think of--such an unlimited kindness. It was as if one could hide nothing from him, but it was not necessary to hide it, because he would forgive anything. They were the most unaccusing eyes that Keating had ever seen.

"But, Mr. Toohey," he muttered, "I did want to..."

"You wanted to thank me for my article," said Toohey and made a little grimace of gay despair. "And here I've been trying so hard to prevent you from doing it. Do let me get away with it, won't you? There's no reason why you should thank me. If you happened to deserve the things I said--well, the credit belongs to you, not to me. Doesn't it?"

"But I was so happy that you thought I'm..."

"...a great architect? But surely, my boy, you knew that. Or weren't you quite sure? Never quite sure of it?"

"Well, I..."

It was only a second's pause. And it seemed to Keating that this pause was all Toohey had wanted to hear from him; Toohey did not wait for the rest, but spoke as if he had received a full answer, and an answer that pleased him.

"And as for the Cosmo-Slotnick Building, who can deny that it's an extraordinary achievement? You know, I was greatly intrigued by its plan. It's a most ingenious plan. A brilliant plan. Very unusual. Quite different from what I have observed in your previous work. Isn't it?"

"Naturally," said Keating, his voice clear and hard for the first time, "the

problem was different from anything I'd done before, so I worked out that plan to fit the particular requirements of the problem."

"Of course," said Toohey gently. "A beautiful piece of work. You should be proud of it."

Keating noticed that Toohey's eyes stood centered in the middle of the lenses and the lenses stood focused straight on his pupils, and Keating knew suddenly that Toohey knew he had not designed the plan of the Cosmo-Slotnick Building. This did not frighten him. What frightened him was that he saw approval in Toohey's eyes.

"If you must feel--no, not gratitude, gratitude is such an embarrassing word--but, shall we say, appreciation?" Toohey continued, and his voice had grown softer, as if Keating were a fellow conspirator who would know that the words used were to be, from now on, a code for a private meaning, "you might thank me for understanding the symbolic implications of your building and for stating them in words as you stated them in marble. Since, of course, you are not just a common mason, but a thinker in stone."

"Yes," said Keating, "that was my abstract theme, when I designed the building--the great masses and the flowers of culture. I've always believed that true culture springs from the common man. But I had no hope that anyone would ever understand me."

Toohey smiled. His thin lips slid open, his teeth showed. He was not looking at Keating. He was looking down at his own hand, the long, slender, sensitive hand of a concert pianist, moving a sheet of paper on the desk. Then he said: "Perhaps we're brothers of the spirit, Keating. The human spirit. That is all that matters in life"--not looking at Keating, but past him, the lenses raised flagrantly to a line over Keating's face.

And Keating knew that Toohey knew he had never thought of any abstract theme until he'd read that article, and more: that Toohey approved again. When the lenses moved slowly to Keating's face, the eyes were sweet with affection, an affection very cold and very real. Then Keating felt as if the walls of the room were moving gently in upon him, pushing him into a terrible intimacy, not with Toohey, but with some unknown guilt. He wanted to leap to his feet and run. He sat still, his mouth half open.

And without knowing what prompted him, Keating heard his own voice in the silence:

"And I did want to say how glad I was that you escaped that maniac's bullet yesterday, Mr. Toohey."

"Oh?...Oh, thanks. That? Well! Don't let it upset you. Just one of the minor penalties one pays for prominence in public life."

"I've never liked Mallory. A strange sort of person. Too tense. I don't like people who're tense. I've never liked his work either."

"Just an exhibitionist. Won't amount to much."

"It wasn't my idea, of course, to give him a try. It was Mr. Slotnick's. Pull, you know. But Mr. Slotnick knew better in the end."

"Did Mallory ever mention my name to you?"

"No. Never."

"I haven't even met him, you know. Never saw him before. Why did he do it?"

And then it was Toohey who sat still, before what he saw on Keating's face; Toohey, alert and insecure for the first time. This was it, thought Keating, this was the bond between them, and the bond was fear, and more, much more than that, but fear was the only recognizable name to give it. And he knew, with unreasoning finality, that he liked Toohey better than any man he had ever met.

"Well, you know how it is," said Keating brightly, hoping that the commonplace he was about to utter would close the subject. "Mallory is an incompetent and knows it and he decided to take it out on you as a symbol of the great and the able."

But instead of a smile, Keating saw the shot of Toohey's sudden glance at him; it was not a glance, it was a fluoroscope, he thought he could feel it crawling searchingly inside his bones. Then Toohey's face seemed to harden, drawing together again in composure, and Keating knew that Toohey had found relief somewhere, in his bones or in his gaping, bewildered face, that some hidden immensity of ignorance within him had given Toohey reassurance. Then Toohey said slowly, strangely, derisively:

"You and I, we're going to be great friends, Peter."

Keating let a moment pass before he caught himself to answer hastily:

"Oh, I hope so, Mr. Toohey!"

"Really, Peter! I'm not as old as all that, am I? 'Ellsworth' is the monument to my parents' peculiar taste in nomenclature."

"Yes...Ellsworth."

"That's better. I really don't mind the name, when compared to some of the things I've been called privately--and publicly--these many years. Oh, well. Flattering. When one makes enemies one knows that one's dangerous where it's necessary to be dangerous. There are things that must be destroyed--or they'll destroy us. We'll see a great deal of each other, Peter." The voice was smooth and sure now, with the finality of a decision tested and reached, with the certainty that never again would anything in Keating be a question mark to him. "For instance, I've been thinking for some time of getting together a few young architects--I know so many of them--just an informal little organization, to exchange ideas, you know, to develop a spirit of co-operation, to follow a common line of action for the common good of the profession if necessity arises. Nothing as stuffy as the A.G.A. Just a youth group. Think you'd be interested?"

"Why, of course! And you'd be the chairman?"

"Oh dear, no. I'm never chairman of anything, Peter. I dislike titles. No, I rather thought you'd make the right chairman for us, can't think of anyone better."

"Me?"

"You, Peter. Oh, well, it's only a project--nothing definite--just an idea I've been toying with in odd moments. We'll talk about it some other time. There's something I'd like you to do--and that's really one of the reasons why I wanted to meet you,"

"Oh, sure, Mr. Too--sure, Ellsworth. Anything I can do for you..."

"It's not for me. Do you know Lois Cook?"

"Lois...who?"

"Cook. You don't. But you will. That young woman is the greatest literary genius since Goethe. You must read her, Peter. I don't suggest that as a rule except to the discriminating. She's so much above the heads of the middle-class who love the obvious. She's planning to build a house. A little private residence on the Bowery. Yes, on the Bowery. Just like Lois. She's asked me to recommend an architect. I'm certain that it will take a person like you to understand a person like Lois. I'm going to give her your name--if you're interested in what is to be a small, though quite costly, residence."

"But of course! That's...very kind of you, Ellsworth! You know, I thought when you said...and when I read your note, that you wanted--well, some favor from me, you know, a good turn for a good turn, and here you're..."

"My dear Peter, how naive you are!"

"Oh, I suppose I shouldn't have said that! I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you, I..."

"I don't mind. You must learn to know me better. Strange as it may sound, a totally selfless interest in one's fellow men is possible in this world, Peter."

Then they talked about Lois Cook and her three published works--"Novels? No, Peter, not exactly novels....No, not collections of stories either...that's just it, just Lois Cook--a new form of literature entirely..."--about the fortune she had inherited from a long line of successful tradesmen, and about the house she planned to build.

It was only when Toohey had risen to escort Keating to the door--and Keating noted how precariously erect he stood on his very small feet--that Toohey paused suddenly to say:

"Incidentally, it seems to me as if I should remember some personal connection between us, though for the life of me I can't quite place...oh, yes, of course. My niece. Little Catherine."

Keating felt his face tighten, and knew he must not allow this to be discussed, but smiled awkwardly instead of protesting.

"I understand you're engaged to her?"

"Yes."

"Charming," said Toohey. "Very charming. Should enjoy being your uncle. You love her very much?"

"Yes," said Keating. "Very much."

The absence of stress in his voice made the answer solemn. It was, laid before Toohey, the first bit of sincerity and of importance within Keating's being.

"How pretty," said Toohey. "Young love. Spring and dawn and heaven and drugstore chocolates at a dollar and a quarter a box. The prerogative of the gods and of

the movies....Oh, I do approve, Peter. I think it's lovely. You couldn't have made a better choice than Catherine. She's just the kind for whom the world is well lost--the world with all its problems and all its opportunities for greatness--oh, yes, well lost because she's innocent and sweet and pretty and anemic."

"If you're going to..." Keating began, but Toohey smiled with a luminous sort of kindness.

"Oh, Peter, of course I understand. And I approve. I'm a realist. Man has always insisted on making an ass of himself. Oh, come now, we must never lose our sense of humor. Nothing's really sacred but a sense of humor. Still, I've always loved the tale of Tristan and Isolde. It's the most beautiful story ever told--next to that of Mickey and Minnie Mouse."

4.

"...TOOTHBRUSH in the jaw toothbrush brush brush tooth jaw foam dome in the foam Roman dome come home home in the jaw Rome dome tooth toothbrush toothpick pickpocket socket rocket..."

Peter Keating squinted his eyes, his glance unfocused as for a great distance, but put the book down. The book was thin and black, with scarlet letters forming: *Clouds and Shrouds* by Lois Cook. The jacket said that it was a record of Miss Cook's travels around the world.

Keating leaned back with a sense of warmth and well-being. He liked this book. It had made the routine of his Sunday morning breakfast a profound spiritual experience; he was certain that it was profound, because he didn't understand it.

Peter Keating had never felt the need to formulate abstract convictions. But he had a working substitute. "A thing is not high if one can reach it; it is not great if one can reason about it; it is not deep if one can see its bottom"--this had always been his credo, unstated and unquestioned. This spared him any attempt to reach, reason or see; and it cast a nice reflection of scorn on those who made the attempt. So he was able to enjoy the work of Lois Cook. He felt uplifted by the knowledge of his own capacity to respond to the abstract, the profound, the ideal. Toohey had said: "That's just it, sound as sound, the poetry of words as words, style as a revolt against style. But only the fines' spirit can appreciate it, Peter." Keating thought he could talk of this book to his friends, and if they did not understand he would know that he was superior to them. He would not need to explain that superiority--that's just it, "superiority as superiority"--automatically denied to those who asked for explanations. He loved the book.

He reached for another piece of toast. He saw, at the end of the table, left there for him by his mother, the heavy pile of the Sunday paper. He picked it up, feeling strong enough, in this moment, in the confidence of his secret spiritual grandeur, to face the whole world contained in that pile. He pulled out the rotogravure section. He stopped. He saw the reproduction of a drawing: the Enright House by Howard Roark.

He did not need to see the caption or the brusque signature in the corner of the sketch; he knew that no one else had conceived that house and he knew the manner of drawing, serene and violent at once, the pencil lines like high-tension wires on the paper, slender and innocent to see, but not to be touched. It was a

structure on a broad space by the East River. He did not grasp it as a building, at first glance, but as a rising mass of rock crystal. There was the same severe, mathematical order holding together a free, fantastic growth; straight lines and clean angles, space slashed with a knife, yet in a harmony of formation as delicate as the work of a jeweler; an incredible variety of shapes, each separate unit unrepeated, but leading inevitably to the next one and to the whole; so that the future inhabitants were to have, not a square cage out of a square pile of cages, but each a single house held to the other houses like a single crystal to the side of a rock. Keating looked at the sketch. He had known for a long time that Howard Roark had been chosen to build the Enright House. He had seen a few mentions of Roark's name in the papers; not much, all of it to be summed up only as "some young architect chosen by Mr. Enright for some reason, probably an interesting young architect." The caption under the drawing announced that the construction of the project was to begin at once. Well, thought Keating, and dropped the paper, so what? The paper fell beside the black and scarlet book. He looked at both. He felt dimly as if Lois Cook were his defense against Howard Roark. "What's that, Petey?" his mother's voice asked behind him. He handed the paper to her over his shoulder. The paper fell past him back to the table in a second. "Oh," shrugged Mrs. Keating. "Huh..." She stood beside him. Her trim silk dress was fitted too tightly, revealing the solid rigidity of her corset; a small pin glittered at her throat, small enough to display ostentatiously that it was made of real diamonds. She was like the new apartment into which they had moved: conspicuously expensive. The apartment's decoration had been Keating's first professional job for himself. It had been furnished in fresh, new mid-Victorian. It was conservative and stately. Over the fireplace in the drawing room hung a large old painting of what was not but looked like an illustrious ancestor.

"Petey sweetheart, I do hate to rush you on a Sunday morning, but isn't it time to dress up? I've got to run now and I'd hate you to forget the time and be late, it's so nice of Mr. Toohey asking you to his house!"

"Yes, Mother."

"Any famous guests coming too?"

"No. No guests. But there will be one other person there. Not famous." She looked at him expectantly. He added: "Katie will be there."

The name seemed to have no effect on her whatever. A strange assurance had coated her lately, like a layer of fat through which that particular question could penetrate no longer.

"Just a family tea," he emphasized. "That's what he said."

"Very nice of him. I'm sure Mr. Toohey is a very intelligent man."

"Yes, Mother."

He rose impatiently and went to his room.

#

It was Keating's first visit to the distinguished residential hotel where Catherine and her uncle had moved recently. He did not notice much about the apartment, beyond remembering that it was simple, very clean and smartly modest, that it contained a great number of books and very few pictures, but these authentic and precious. One never remembered the apartment of Ellsworth Toohey, only its host. The host, on this Sunday afternoon, wore a dark gray suit, correct as a uniform, and bedroom slippers of black patent leather trimmed with

red; the slippers mocked the severe elegance of the suit, yet completed the elegance as an audacious anticlimax. He sat in a broad, low chair and his face wore an expression of cautious gentleness, so cautious that Keating and Catherine felt, at times, as if they were insignificant soap bubbles.

Keating did not like the way Catherine sat on the edge of a chair, hunched, her legs drawn awkwardly together. He wished she would not wear the same suit for the third season, but she did. She kept her eyes on one point somewhere in the middle of the carpet. She seldom looked at Keating. She never looked at her uncle. Keating found no trace of that joyous admiration with which she had always spoken of Toohey, which he had expected to see her display in his presence. There was something heavy and colorless about Catherine, and very tired.

Toohey's valet brought in the tea tray.

"You will pour, won't you please, my dear?" said Toohey to Catherine. "Ah, there's nothing like tea in the afternoon. When the British Empire collapses, historians will find that it had made but two invaluable contributions to civilization--this tea ritual and the detective novel. Catherine, my dear, do you have to grasp that pot handle as if it were a meat axe? But never mind, it's charming, it's really what we love you for, Peter and I, we wouldn't love you if you were graceful as a duchess--who wants a duchess nowadays?"

Catherine poured the tea and spilled it on the glass table top, which she had never done before.

"I did want to see you two together for once," said Toohey, holding a delicate cup balanced nonchalantly. "Perfectly silly of me, isn't it? There's really nothing to make an occasion of, but then I'm silly and sentimental at times, like all of us. My compliments on your choice, Catherine. I owe you an apology, I never suspected you of such good taste. You and Peter make a wonderful couple. You'll do a great deal for him. You'll cook his Cream of Wheat, launder his handkerchiefs and bear his children, though of course the children will all have measles at one time or another, which is a nuisance."

"But, after all, you...you do approve of it?" Keating asked anxiously.

"Approve of it? Of what, Peter?"

"Of our marriage...eventually."

"What a superfluous question, Peter! Of course, I approve of it. But how young you are! That's the way of young people--they make an issue where none exists. You asked that as if the whole thing were important enough to disapprove of."

"Katie and I met seven years ago," said Keating defensively. "And it was love at first sight of course?"

"Yes," said Keating and felt himself being ridiculous. "It must have been spring," said Toohey. "It usually is. There's always a dark movie theater, and two people lost to the world, their hands clasped together--but hands do perspire when held too long, don't they? Still, it's beautiful to be in love. The sweetest story ever told--and the tritest. Don't turn away like that, Catherine. We must never allow ourselves to lose our sense of humor."

He smiled. The kindness of his smile embraced them both. The kindness was so great that it made their love seem small and mean, because only something contemptible could evoke such immensity of compassion. He asked:

"Incidentally, Peter, when do you intend to get married?"

"Oh, well...we've never really set a definite date, you know how it's been, all the things happening to me and now Katie has this work of hers and...And, by the way," he added sharply, because that matter of Katie's work irritated him without reason, "when we're married, Katie will have to give that up. I don't approve of it."

"But of course," said Toohey, "I don't approve of it either, if Catherine doesn't like it."

Catherine was working as day nursery attendant at the Clifford Settlement House. It had been her own idea. She had visited the settlement often with her uncle, who conducted classes in economics there, and she had become interested in the work.

"But I do like it!" she said with sudden excitement. "I don't see why you resent it, Peter!" There was a harsh little note in her voice, defiant and unpleasant. "I've never enjoyed anything so much in my life. Helping people who're helpless and unhappy. I went there this morning--I didn't have to, but I wanted to--and then I rushed so on my way home, I didn't have time to change my clothes, but that doesn't matter, who cares what I look like? And"--the harsh note was gone, she was speaking eagerly and very fast--"Uncle Ellsworth, imagine! little Billy Hansen had a sore throat--you remember Billy? And the nurse wasn't there, and I had to swab his throat with Argyrol, the poor thing! He had the most awful white mucus patches down in his throat!" Her voice seemed to shine, as if she were speaking of great beauty. She looked at her uncle. For the first time Keating saw the affection he had expected. She went on speaking about her work, the children, the settlement. Toohey listened gravely. He said nothing. But the earnest attention in his eyes changed him, his mocking gaiety vanished and he forgot his own advice, he was being serious, very serious indeed. When he noticed that Catherine's plate was empty, he offered her the sandwich tray with a simple gesture and made it, somehow, a gracious gesture of respect.

Keating waited impatiently till she paused for an instant. He wanted to change the subject. He glanced about the room and saw the Sunday papers. This was a question he had wanted to ask for a long time. He asked cautiously:

"Ellsworth...what do you think of Roark?"

"Roark? Roark?" asked Toohey. "Who is Roark?" The too innocent, too trifling manner in which he repeated the name, with the faint, contemptuous question mark quite audible at the end, made Keating certain that Toohey knew the name well. One did not stress total ignorance of a subject if one were in total ignorance of it. Keating said:

"Howard Roark. You know, the architect. The one who's doing the Enright House."

"Oh? Oh, yes, someone's doing that Enright House at last, isn't he?"

"There's a picture of it in the Chronicle today."

"Is there? I did glance through the Chronicle."

"And...what do you think of that building?"

"If it were important, I should have remembered it."

"Of course!" Keating's syllables danced, as if his breath caught at each one in passing: "It's an awful, crazy thing! Like nothing you ever saw or want to see!"

He felt a sense of deliverance. It was as if he had spent his life believing that he carried a congenital disease, and suddenly the words of the greatest specialist on earth had pronounced him healthy. He wanted to laugh, freely, stupidly, without dignity. He wanted to talk.

"Howard's a friend of mine," he said happily. "A friend of yours? You know him?"

"Do I know him! Why, we went to school together--Stanton, you know--why, he lived at our house for three years, I can tell you the color of his underwear and how he takes a shower--I've seen him!"

"He lived at your house in Stanton?" Toohey repeated. Toohey spoke with a kind of cautious precision. The sounds of his voice were small and dry and final, like the cracks of matches being broken.

It was very peculiar, thought Keating. Toohey was asking him a great many questions about Howard Roark. But the questions did not make sense. They were not about buildings, they were not about architecture at all. They were pointless personal questions--strange to ask about a man of whom he had never heard before.

"Does he laugh often?"

"Very rarely."

"Does he seem unhappy?"

"Never."

"Did he have many friends at Stanton?"

"He's never had any friends anywhere."

"The boys didn't like him?"

"Nobody can like him."

"Why?"

"He makes you feel it would be an impertinence to like him."

"Did he go out, drink, have a good time?"

"Never."

"Does he like money?"

"No."

"Does he like to be admired?"

"No."

"Does he believe in God?"

"No."

"Does he talk much?"

"Very little."

"Does he listen if others discuss any...ideas with him?"

"He listens. It would be better if he didn't."

"Why?"

"It would be less insulting--if you know what I mean, when a man listens like that and you know it hasn't made the slightest bit of difference to him."

"Did he always want to be an architect?"

"He..."

"What's the matter, Peter?"

"Nothing. It just occurred to me how strange it is that I've never asked myself that about him before. Here's what's strange: you can't ask that about him. He's a maniac on the subject of architecture. It seems to mean so damn much to him that he's lost all human perspective. He just has no sense of humor about himself at all--now there's a man without a sense of humor, Ellsworth. You don't ask what he'd do if he didn't want to be an architect."

"No," said Toohey. "You ask what he'd do if he couldn't be an architect."

"He'd walk over corpses. Any and all of them. All of us. But he'd be an architect."

Toohey folded his napkin, a crisp little square of cloth on his knee; he folded it accurately, once across each way, and he ran his fingernail along the edges to make a sharp crease.

"Do you remember our little youth group of architects, Peter?" he asked. "I'm making arrangements for a first meeting soon. I've spoken to many of our future members and you'd be flattered by what they said about you as our prospective chairman."

They talked pleasantly for another half hour. When Keating rose to go, Toohey declared:

"Oh, yes. I did speak to Lois Cook about you. You'll hear from her shortly."

"Thank you so much, Ellsworth. By the way, I'm reading *Clouds and Shrouds*."

"And?"

"Oh, it's tremendous. You know, Ellsworth, it...it makes you think so differently about everything you've thought before."

"Yes," said Toohey, "doesn't it?"

He stood at the window, looking out at the last sunshine of a cold, bright

afternoon. Then he turned and said:

"It's a lovely day. Probably one of the last this year. Why don't you take Catherine out for a little walk, Peter?"

"Oh, I'd love to!" said Catherine eagerly.

"Well, go ahead." Toohey smiled gaily. "What's the matter, Catherine? Do you have to wait for my permission?"

When they walked out together, when they were alone in the cold brilliance of streets flooded with late sunlight, Keating felt himself recapturing everything Catherine had always meant to him, the strange emotion that he could not keep in the presence of others. He closed his hand over hers. She withdrew her hand, took off her glove and slipped her fingers into his. And then he thought suddenly that hands did perspire when held too long, and he walked faster in irritation. He thought that they were walking there like Mickey and Minnie Mouse and that they probably appeared ridiculous to the passers-by. To shake himself free of these thoughts he glanced down at her face. She was looking straight ahead at the gold light, he saw her delicate profile and the faint crease of a smile in the corner of her mouth, a smile of quiet happiness. But he noticed that the edge of her eyelid was pale and he began to wonder whether she was anemic.

#

Lois Cook sat on the floor in the middle of her living room, her legs crossed Turkish fashion, showing large bare knees, gray stockings rolled over tight garters, and a piece of faded pink drawers. Peter Keating sat on the edge of a violet satin chaise lounge. Never before had he felt uncomfortable at a first interview with a client.

Lois Cook was thirty-seven. She had stated insistently, in her publicity and in private conversation, that she was sixty-four. It was repeated as a whimsical joke and it created about her name a vague impression of eternal youth. She was tall, dry, narrow-shouldered and broad-hipped. She had a long, sallow face, and eyes set close together. Her hair hung about her ears in greasy strands. Her fingernails were broken. She looked offensively unkempt, with studied slovenliness as careful as grooming--and for the same purpose.

She talked incessantly, rocking back and forth on her haunches:

"...yes, on the Bowery. A private residence. The shrine on the Bowery. I have the site, I wanted it and I bought it, as simple as that, or my fool lawyer bought it for me, you must meet my lawyer, he has halitosis. I don't know what you'll cost me, but it's unessential, money is commonplace. Cabbage is commonplace too. It must have three stories and a living room with a tile floor."

"Miss Cook, I've read *Clouds and Shrouds* and it was a spiritual revelation to me. Allow me to include myself among the few who understand the courage and significance of what you're achieving single-handed while..."

"Oh, can the crap," said Lois Cook and winked at him.

"But I mean it!" he snapped angrily. "I loved your book. I..."

She looked bored.

"It is so commonplace," she drawled, "to be understood by everybody."

"But Mr. Toohey said..."

"Ah, yes. Mr. Toohey." Her eyes were alert now, insolently guilty, like the eyes of a child who has just perpetrated some nasty little joke. "Mr. Toohey. I'm chairman of a little youth group of writers in which Mr. Toohey is very interested."

"You are?" he said happily. It seemed to be the first direct communication between them. "Isn't that interesting! Mr. Toohey is getting together a little youth group of architects, too, and he's kind enough to have me in mind for chairman."

"Oh," she said and winked. "One of us?"

"Of whom?"

He did not know what he had done, but he knew that he had disappointed her in some way. She began to laugh. She sat there, looking up at him, laughing deliberately in his face, laughing ungraciously and not gaily.

"What the...!" He controlled himself. "What's the matter, Miss Cook?"

"Oh my!" she said. "You're such a sweet, sweet boy and so pretty!"

"Mr. Toohey is a great man," he said angrily. "He's the most...the noblest personality I've ever..."

"Oh, yes. Mr. Toohey is a wonderful man." Her voice was strange by omission, it was flagrantly devoid of respect. "My best friend. The most wonderful man on earth. There's the earth and there's Mr. Toohey--a law of nature. Besides, think how nicely you can rhyme it: Toohey--goeey--phooey--hoey. Nevertheless, he's a saint. That's very rare. As rare as genius. I'm a genius. I want a living room without windows. No windows at all, remember that when you draw up the plans. No windows, a tile floor and a black ceiling. And no electricity. I want no electricity in my house, just kerosene lamps. Kerosene lamps with chimneys, and candles. To hell with Thomas Edison! Who was he anyway?"

Her words did not disturb him as much as her smile. It was not a smile, it was a permanent smirk raising the corners of her long mouth, making her look like a sly, vicious imp.

"And, Keating, I want the house to be ugly. Magnificently ugly. I want it to be the ugliest house in New York."

"The...ugliest. Miss Cook?"

"Sweetheart, the beautiful is so commonplace!"

"Yes, but...but I...well, I don't see how I could permit myself to..."

"Keating, where's your courage? Aren't you capable of a sublime gesture on occasion? They all work so hard and struggle and suffer, trying to achieve beauty, trying to surpass one another in beauty. Let's surpass them all! Let's throw their sweat in their face. Let's destroy them at one stroke. Let's be gods. Let's be ugly."

He accepted the commission. After a few weeks he stopped feeling uneasy about it. Wherever he mentioned this new job, he met a respectful curiosity. It was an

amused curiosity, but it was respectful. The name of Lois Cook was well known in the best drawing rooms he visited. The titles of her books were flashed in conversation like the diamonds in the speaker's intellectual crown. There was always a note of challenge in the voices pronouncing them. It sounded as if the speaker were being very brave. It was a satisfying bravery; it never aroused antagonism. For an author who did not sell, her name seemed strangely famous and honored. She was the standard-bearer of a vanguard of intellect and revolt. Only it was not quite clear to him just exactly what the revolt was against. Somehow, he preferred not to know.

He designed the house as she wished it. It was a three-floor edifice, part marble, part stucco, adorned with gargoyles and carriage lanterns. It looked like a structure from an amusement park.

His sketch of it was reproduced in more publications than any other drawing he had ever made, with the exception of the Cosmo-Slotnick Building. One commentator expressed the opinion that "Peter Keating is showing a promise of being more than just a bright young man with a knack for pleasing stuffy moguls of big business. He is venturing into the field of intellectual experimentation with a client such as Lois Cook." Toohey referred to the house as "a cosmic joke."

But a peculiar sensation remained in Keating's mind: the feeling of an aftertaste. He would experience a dim flash of it while working on some important structure he liked; he would experience it in the moments when he felt proud of his work. He could not identify the quality of the feeling; but he knew that part of it was a sense of shame.

Once, he confessed it to Ellsworth Toohey. Toohey laughed. "That's good for you, Peter. One must never allow oneself to acquire an exaggerated sense of one's own importance. There's no necessity to burden oneself with absolutes."

5.

DOMINIQUE had returned to New York. She returned without purpose, merely because she could not stay in her country house longer than three days after her last visit to the quarry. She had to be in the city, it was a sudden necessity, irresistible and senseless. She expected nothing of the city. But she wanted the feeling of the streets and the buildings holding her there. In the morning, when she awakened and heard the muffled roar of traffic far below, the sound was a humiliation, a reminder of where she was and why. She stood at the window, her arms spread wide, holding on to each side of the frame; it was as if she held a piece of the city, all the streets and rooftops outlined on the glass between her two hands.

She went out alone for long walks. She walked fast, her hands in the pockets of an old coat, its collar raised. She had told herself that she was not hoping to meet him. She was not looking for him. But she had to be out in the streets, blank, purposeless, for hours at a time.

She had always hated the streets of a city. She saw the faces streaming past her, the faces made alike by fear--fear as a common denominator, fear of themselves, fear of all and of one another, fear making them ready to pounce upon whatever was held sacred by any single one they met. She could not define the nature or the reason of that fear. But she had always felt its presence. She had kept herself clean and free in a single passion--to touch nothing. She had liked facing them in the streets, she had liked the impotence of their hatred, because she offered them nothing to be hurt.