

a cargo moving in the world, the ocean's empty, Billy . . . now tell me the truth, where am I? *(Puts down the phone. Pause. Father stands almost stiffly, as though to take a storm.)*

MOTHER. What's that about? What are you winding up? *(Father stands staring, but she seems to hear additional shocking facts.)* What are you talking about? When did this start?—Well, how much are you taking out of it?—You lost your mind? You've got over four hundred thousand dollars' worth of stocks, you can sell the . . . *(Father laughs.)*—You sold those wonderful stocks?!—I just bought a new grand piano, why didn't you say something! And a silver service for my brother, and you don't say anything?! *(More subdued, walks a few steps in thought.)*—Well then—you'd better cash your insurance; you've got at least seventy-five thousand cash value. . . . *(Halts, turning in shock.)*—When! *(Father is gradually losing his stance, his grandeur, pulls his tie loose.)*—All right, then—we'll get rid of my bonds. Do it tomorrow.—What do you mean? Well you get them back, I've got ninety-one thousand dollars in bonds you gave me. Those are my bonds. I've got bonds. . . . *(Breaks off, open horror on her face and now a growing contempt.)*—You mean you saw everything going down and you throw good money after bad? Are you some kind of a moron?

IKE. You don't walk away from a business; I came to this country with a tag around my neck like a package in the bottom of the boat!

MOTHER. I should have run the day I met you.

IKE. *(As though stabbed.)* Rose! *(He sits, closing his eyes, his neck bent.)*

MOTHER. I should have done what my sisters did, tell my parents to go to hell and thought of myself for once! I should have run for my life!

IKE. *(Indicating a point nearby.)* Sssh, I hear the kids. . . .

MOTHER. I ought to get a divorce!

IKE. Rose, the college men are jumping out of windows.

MOTHER. But your last dollar?! *(Bending over, into his face.)* You are an idiot! *(Her nearness forces him to stand, they look at each other, strangers.)*

QUENTIN. *(He looks up at the Tower—aware now.)* Yes! For no reason—they don't even ask your name!

IKE. *(He looks toward the nearby point.)* Somebody's crying?

Quentin's in there. You better talk to him. *(She goes in some trepidation toward it. A foot or so from where he indicated, she halts.)*

MOTHER. Quentin? Darling? You better get dressed. Don't cry, dear. . . . *(She is stopped short by something "Quentin" has said.)* What I said?—Why, what did I say? Well I was a little angry, that's all, but I never said that. I think he's a wonderful man! *(Laughs.)* How could I say a thing like that? Quentin! *(As though he is disappearing she extends her arms.)* I didn't say anything! *(With a cry toward someone lost.)* Darling, I didn't say anything! *(Father, Dan and Mother exit. Instantly Holga appears, coming toward him.)*

QUENTIN. They don't even ask your name.

HOLGA. Quentin? Quentin? *(He is still staring at Mother from whom he turns toward Holga.)*

QUENTIN. You love me, don't you?

HOLGA. Yes. *(Of the wildflowers in her arms.)* Look, the car will be all sweet inside!

QUENTIN. *(Claps his hands.)* Let's get out of this dump. Come on I'll race you to the car!

HOLGA. Okay! On your mark! *(They get set.)*

QUENTIN. Last one there's a rancid wurst!

HOLGA. Get ready! Set! *(Quentin suddenly looks up at the Tower, and sits on the ground as though he had committed a sacrilege. She has read his emotion, touches his face.)* Quentin, dear—no one they didn't kill can be innocent again.

QUENTIN. But how did you solve it? How do you get so purposeful? You're so full of hope!

HOLGA. Quentin, I think it's a mistake to ever look for hope outside one's self. One day you faint because the gardener cut his finger, within a week you're climbing over the corpses of children bombed in a subway. What hope can there be if that is so? I tried to die near the end of the war; *(Rises, moves up the stair toward the Tower.)* the same dream returned each night until I dared not go to sleep and grew quite ill. I dreamed I had a child, and even in the dream I saw it was my life, and it was an idiot, and I ran away. But it always crept onto my lap again, clutched at my clothes. Until I thought, if I could kiss it, whatever in it was my own, perhaps I could sleep. And I bent to its broken face, and it was horrible. . . . But I kissed it. I think one must

finally take one's life in one's arms, Quentin. Come, they play "The Magic Flute" tonight. You like "The Magic Flute"? (*Holga exits from beneath the Tower.*)

QUENTIN. (*Alone.*) I miss her . . . badly. . . . And yet, I can't sign my letters to her "With love." I put, "Sincerely," or "As ever,"—it's too damn clear that I'm choosing what I do . . . (*Felice enters.*)—and it cuts the strings between my hands and heaven. It sounds foolish, but I feel . . . unblest. (*Felice holds up her hand in blessing, then exits.*) And I keep looking back to when there seemed to be some absolute; some duty in the sky. I had a dinner table and a wife, (*Louise appears with dish cloth wiping silver.*) and the world so wonderfully threatened by injustices I was born to correct! To believe!—How fine it seems! Like some kind of paradise compared to this. (*He is aware of Elsie appearing on second platform, a beachrobe hangs from her shoulders, her arms out of the sleeves, her back to us.*) Until I begin to look at it. God, when I think of what I believed I want to hide! (*Glancing at Elsie.*) But I wasn't all that young! A man of thirty-two sees a guest changing out of a wet bathing suit in his bedroom . . . (*Elsie, as he approaches, turns to him and her robe slips off one shoulder.*) and she goes right on standing there with her two bare faces hanging out. . . .

ELSIE. Oh, are you through working? Why don't you swim now? The water's just right.

QUENTIN. (*A laugh of great pain, crying out.*) I tell you I didn't believe she knew she was naked! (*Louise enters and sits R., as though on the ground. Elsie joins her.*)—Well because she was married! Because she could tell when the Budapest String Quartet was playing off key; the woman had absolute pitch, how could she be unfaithful? (*Lou enters reading brief u.*) And her husband my friend, a saintly professor of law, editing my first appeal to the Supreme Court on the grass outside that window—I could see the top of his head past her tit, for God's sake!—Of course I saw, but it's what you allow yourself to admit! To admit what you see endangers principles! (*Quentin turns to Louise and Elsie. They are talking in an intense whisper. He now approaches them from behind. Halts, turns to the Listener.*) To admit that when two women are whispering, and they stop abruptly when you appear. . . .

ELSIE and LOUISE. (*Turning to him after an abrupt stop to their talking.*) Hi.

QUENTIN. . . . The subject must have been sex. Can you admit that?—If one of them is your wife . . . that she must have been talking about you?

ELSIE. (*As though to get him to go.*) Lou's behind the house reading your brief. He says it's superb!

QUENTIN. I hope so, Elsie. I've been kind of nervous about what he'd say.

ELSIE. I wish you'd tell him that, Quentin! Will you? Just how much his opinion means to you. It's important you tell him. It's so enchanting here. (*Taking in Louise, and stands.*) I envy you both so much! (*She goes u., pausing beside her husband, Lou. He is a very tender, kindly man in shorts, he is absorbed in reading the brief.*) I want one more walk along the beach before the train. Did you comb your hair today?

LOU. I think so. (*Closing the brief, coming down to Quentin.*) Quentin! This is superb! It's hardly like a brief at all; there's a majestic quality, like a classic opinion! (*Elsie exits. Lou, chuckling, tugs Quentin's sleeve.*) I almost feel honored to have known you!

QUENTIN. I'm so glad, Lou—

LOU. (*With an arm around Louise.*) Your whole career will change with this! Could I ask a favor?

QUENTIN. Oh, anything, Lou.

LOU. Would you offer it to Elsie, to read? I know it seems an extraordinary request, but . . .

QUENTIN. No, I'd be delighted.

LOU. It's shaken her terribly—my being subpoenaed and all those damned headlines. Despite everything it does affect one's whole relationship. So any gesture of respect . . . for example I gave her the manuscript of my new textbook and I've even called off publication for a while to incorporate her criticism. It may be her psychoanalysis, but she's become remarkably acute. . . .

LOUISE. My roast! (*Louise exits u.*)

QUENTIN. But I hope you don't delay it too long, Lou, it'd be wonderful to publish something now. Just to show those bastards.

LOU. (*Glancing behind him.*) But you see, it's a textbook for the schools, and Elsie feels that it will only start a new attack on me. . . .