



STEPHEN
KING

RITA HAYWORTH AND
SHAW SHANK
REDEMPTION

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SCRIBNER

New York London Toronto Sydney New Delhi

For Russ and Florence Dorr

There's a guy like me in every state and federal prison in America, I guess—I'm the guy who can get it for you. Tailor-made cigarettes, a bag of reefer if you're partial to that, a bottle of brandy to celebrate your son or daughter's high school graduation, or almost anything else... within reason, that is. It wasn't always that way.

I came to Shawshank when I was just twenty, and I am one of the few people in our happy little family willing to own up to what they did. I committed murder. I put a large insurance policy on my wife, who was three years older than I was, and then I fixed the brakes of the Chevrolet coupe her father had given us as a wedding present. It worked out exactly as I had planned, except I hadn't planned on her stopping to pick up the neighbor woman and the neighbor woman's infant son on their way down Castle Hill and into town. The brakes let go and the car crashed through the bushes at the edge of the town common, gathering speed. Bystanders said it must have been doing fifty or better when it hit the base of the Civil War statue and burst into flames.

I also hadn't planned on getting caught, but caught I was. I got a season's pass into this place. Maine has no death-penalty, but the District Attorney saw to it that I was tried for all three deaths and given three life sentences, to run one after the other. That fixed up any chance of parole I might have for a long, long time. The judge called what I had done "a hideous, heinous crime," and it was, but it is also in the past now. You can look it up in the yellowing files of the *Castle Rock Call*, where the big headlines announcing my conviction look sort of funny and antique next to the news of Hitler and Mussolini and FDR's alphabet soup agencies.

Have I rehabilitated myself, you ask? I don't even know what that word means, at least as far as prisons and corrections go. I think it's a politician's word. It may have some other meaning, and it may be that I will have a chance to find out, but that is the future... something cons teach themselves not to think about. I was young, good-looking, and from the poor side of town. I knocked up a pretty, sulky, headstrong girl who lived in one of the fine old houses on Carbine Street.

Her father was agreeable to the marriage if I would take a job in the optical company he owned and “work my way up.” I found out that what he really had in mind was keeping me in his house and under his thumb, like a disagreeable pet that has not quite been housebroken and which may bite. Enough hate eventually piled up to cause me to do what I did. Given a second chance I would not do it again, but I’m not sure that means I am rehabilitated.

Anyway, it’s not me I want to tell you about; I want to tell you about a guy named Andy Dufresne. But before I can tell you about Andy, I have to explain a few other things about myself. It won’t take long.

As I said, I’ve been the guy who can get it for you here at Shawshank for damn near forty years. And that doesn’t just mean contraband items like extra cigarettes or booze, although those items always top the list. But I’ve gotten thousands of other items for men doing time here, some of them perfectly legal yet hard to come by in a place where you’ve supposedly been brought to be punished. There was one fellow who was in for raping a little girl and exposing himself to dozens of others; I got him three pieces of pink Vermont marble and he did three lovely sculptures out of them—a baby, a boy of about twelve, and a bearded young man. He called them *The Three Ages of Jesus*, and those pieces of sculpture are now in the parlor of a man who used to be governor of this state.

Or here’s a name you may remember if you grew up north of Massachusetts—Robert Alan Cote. In 1951 he tried to rob the First Mercantile Bank of Mechanic Falls, and the holdup turned into a bloodbath—six dead in the end, two of them members of the gang, three of them hostages, one of them a young state cop who put his head up at the wrong time and got a bullet in the eye. Cote had a penny collection. Naturally they weren’t going to let him have it in here, but with a little help from his mother and a middleman who used to drive a laundry truck, I was able to get it for him. I told him, Bobby, you must be crazy, wanting to have a coin collection in a stone hotel full of thieves. He looked at me and smiled and said, I know where to keep them. They’ll be safe enough. Don’t you worry. And he was right. Bobby Cote died of a brain tumor in 1967, but that coin collection has never turned up.

I’ve gotten men chocolates on Valentine’s Day; I got three of those green milkshakes they serve at McDonald’s around St. Paddy’s Day for a crazy Irishman

named O'Malley; I even arranged for a midnight showing of *Deep Throat* and *The Devil in Miss Jones* for a party of twenty men who had pooled their resources to rent the films... although I ended up doing a week in solitary for that little escapade. It's the risk you run when you're the guy who can get it.

I've gotten reference books and fuck-books, joke novelties like handbuzzers and itching powder, and on more than one occasion I've seen that a long-timer has gotten a pair of panties from his wife or his girlfriend... and I guess you'll know what guys in here do with such items during the long nights when time draws out like a blade. I don't get all those things gratis, and for some items the price comes high. But I don't do it *just* for the money; what good is money to me? I'm never going to own a Cadillac car or fly off to Jamaica for two weeks in February. I do it for the same reason that a good butcher will only sell you fresh meat: I got a reputation and I want to keep it. The only two things I refuse to handle are guns and heavy drugs. I won't help anyone kill himself or anyone else. I have enough killing on my mind to last me a lifetime.

Yeah, I'm a regular Neiman-Marcus. And so when Andy Dufresne came to me in 1949 and asked if I could smuggle Rita Hayworth into the prison for him, I said it would be no problem at all. And it wasn't.



When Andy came to Shawshank in 1948, he was thirty years old. He was a short, neat little man with sandy hair and small, clever hands. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles. His fingernails were always clipped, and they were always clean. That's a funny thing to remember about a man, I suppose, but it seems to sum Andy up for me. He always looked as if he should have been wearing a tie. On the outside he had been a vice-president in the trust department of a large Portland bank. Good work for a man as young as he was especially when you consider how conservative most banks are... and you have to multiply that conservatism by ten when you get up into New England, where folks don't like to trust a man with their money unless he's bald, limping, and constantly plucking at his pants to get his truss around straight. Andy was in for murdering his wife and her lover.

As I believe I have said, everyone in prison is an innocent man. Oh, they read that scripture the way those holy rollers on TV read the Book of Revelation. They were the victims of judges with hearts of stone and balls to match, or incompetent lawyers, or police frame-ups, or bad luck. They read the scripture, but you can see a different scripture in their faces. Most cons are a low sort, no good to themselves or anyone else, and their worst luck was that their mothers carried them to term.

In all my years at Shawshank, there have been less than ten men whom I believed when they told me they were innocent. Andy Dufresne was one of them, although I only became convinced of his innocence over a period of years. If I had been on that jury that heard his case in Portland Superior Court over six stormy weeks in 1947–48, I would have voted to convict, too.

It was one hell of a case, all right; one of those juicy ones with all the right elements. There was a beautiful girl with society connections (dead), a local sports figure (also dead), and a prominent young businessman in the dock. There was this, plus all the scandal the newspapers could hint at. The prosecution had an open-and-shut case. The trial only lasted as long as it did because the DA was planning to run for the U.S. House of Representatives and he wanted John Q. Public to get a good long look at his phiz. It was a crackerjack legal circus, with spectators getting in line at four in the morning, despite the subzero temperatures, to assure themselves of a seat.

The facts of the prosecution's case that Andy never contested were these: that he had a wife, Linda Collins Dufresne; that in June of 1947 she had expressed an interest in learning the game of golf at the Falmouth Hills Country Club; that she did indeed take lessons for four months; that her instructor was the Falmouth Hills golf pro, Glenn Quentin; that in late August of 1947 Andy learned that Quentin and his wife had become lovers; that Andy and Linda Dufresne argued bitterly on the afternoon of September 10th, 1947; that the subject of their argument was her infidelity.

He testified that Linda professed to be glad he knew; the sneaking around, she said, was distressing. She told Andy that she planned to obtain a Reno divorce. Andy told her he would see her in hell before he would see her in Reno. She went off to spend the night with Quentin in Quentin's rented bungalow not far from

the golf course. The next morning his cleaning woman found both of them dead in bed. Each had been shot four times.

It was that last fact that militated more against Andy than any of the others. The DA with the political aspirations made a great deal of it in his opening statement and his closing summation. Andrew Dufresne, he said, was not a wronged husband seeking a hot-blooded revenge against his cheating wife; that, the DA said, could be understood, if not condoned. But this revenge had been of a much colder type. Consider! the DA thundered at the jury. Four and four! Not six shots, but eight! *He had fired the gun empty... and then stopped to reload so he could shoot each of them again!* FOUR FOR HIM AND FOUR FOR HER, the Portland *Sun* blared. The Boston *Register* dubbed him The Even-Steven Killer.

A clerk from the Wise Pawnshop in Lewiston testified that he had sold a six-shot .38 Police Special to Andrew Dufresne just two days before the double murder. A bartender from the country club bar testified that Andy had come in around seven o'clock on the evening of September 10th, had tossed off three straight whiskeys in a twenty-minute period—when he got up from the bar-stool he told the bartender that he was going up to Glenn Quentin's house and he, the bartender, could "read about the rest of it in the papers." Another clerk, this one from the Handy-Pik store a mile or so from Quentin's house, told the court that Dufresne had come in around quarter to nine on that same night. He purchased cigarettes, three quarts of beer, and some dishtowels. The county medical examiner testified that Quentin and the Dufresne woman had been killed between 11:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. on the night of September 10th–11th. The detective from the Attorney General's office who had been in charge of the case testified that there was a turnout less than seventy yards from the bungalow, and that on the afternoon of September 11th, three pieces of evidence had been removed from that turnout: first item, two empty quart bottles of Narragansett Beer (with the defendant's fingerprints on them); second item, twelve cigarette ends (all Kools, the defendant's brand); third item, a plaster moulage of a set of tire tracks (exactly matching the tread-and-wear pattern of the tires on the defendant's 1947 Plymouth).

In the living room of Quentin's bungalow, four dishtowels had been found lying on the sofa. There were bullet-holes through them and powder-burns on

them. The detective theorized (over the agonized objections of Andy's lawyer) that the murderer had wrapped the towels around the muzzle of the murder-weapon to muffle the sound of the gunshots.

Andy Dufresne took the stand in his own defense and told his story calmly, coolly, and dispassionately. He said he had begun to hear distressing rumors about his wife and Glenn Quentin as early as the last week in July. In late August he had become distressed enough to investigate a bit. On an evening when Linda was supposed to have gone shopping in Portland after her golf lesson, Andy had followed her and Quentin to Quentin's one-story rented house (inevitably dubbed "the love-nest" by the papers). He had parked in the turnout until Quentin drove her back to the country club where her car was parked, about three hours later.

"Do you mean to tell this court that you followed your wife in your brand-new Plymouth sedan?" the DA asked him on cross-examination.

"I swapped cars for the evening with a friend," Andy said, and this cool admission of how well-planned his investigation had been did him no good at all in the eyes of the jury.

After returning the friend's car and picking up his own, he had gone home. Linda had been in bed, reading a book. He asked her how her trip to Portland had been. She replied that it had been fun, but she hadn't seen anything she liked well enough to buy. "That's when I knew for sure," Andy told the breathless spectators. He spoke in the same calm, remote voice in which he delivered almost all of his testimony.

"What was your frame of mind in the seventeen days between then and the night your wife was murdered?" Andy's lawyer asked him.

"I was in great distress," Andy said calmly, coldly. Like a man reciting a shopping list he said that he had considered suicide, and had even gone so far as to purchase a gun in Lewiston on September 8th.

His lawyer then invited him to tell the jury what had happened after his wife left to meet Glenn Quentin on the night of the murders. Andy told them... and the impression he made was the worst possible.

I knew him for close to thirty years, and I can tell you he was the most self-possessed man I've ever known. What was right with him he'd only give you a

little at a time. What was wrong with him he kept bottled up inside. If he ever had a dark night of the soul, as some writer or other has called it, you would never know. He was the type of man who, if he had decided to commit suicide, would do it without leaving a note but not until his affairs had been put neatly in order. If he had cried on the witness stand, or if his voice had thickened and grown hesitant, even if he had started yelling at that Washington-bound District Attorney, I don't believe he would have gotten the life sentence he wound up with. Even if he had've, he would have been out on parole by 1954. But he told his story like a recording machine, seeming to say to the jury: This is it. Take it or leave it. They left it.

He said he was drunk that night, that he'd been more or less drunk since August 24th, and that he was a man who didn't handle his liquor very well. Of course that by itself would have been hard for any jury to swallow. They just couldn't see this coldly self-possessed young man in the neat double-breasted three-piece woollen suit ever getting falling-down drunk over his wife's sleazy little affair with some small-town golf pro. I believed it because I had a chance to watch Andy that those six men and six women didn't have.

Andy Dufresne took just four drinks a year all the time I knew him. He would meet me in the exercise yard every year about a week before his birthday and then again about two weeks before Christmas. On each occasion he would arrange for a bottle of Jack Daniel's. He bought it the way most cons arrange to buy their stuff—the slave's wages they pay in here, plus a little of his own. Up until 1965 what you got for your time was a dime an hour. In '65 they raised it all the way up to a quarter. My commission on liquor was and is ten per cent, and when you add on that surcharge to the price of a fine sippin whiskey like the Black Jack, you get an idea of how many hours of Andy Dufresne's sweat in the prison laundry was going to buy his four drinks a year.

On the morning of his birthday, September 20th, he would have himself a big knock, and then he'd have another that night after lights-out. The following day he'd give the rest of the bottle back to me, and I would share it around. As for the other bottle, he dealt himself one drink Christmas night and another on New Year's Eve. Then that bottle would also come to me with instructions to pass it

on. Four drinks a year—and that is the behavior of a man who has been bitten hard by the bottle. Hard enough to draw blood.

He told the jury that on the night of the tenth he had been so drunk he could only remember what had happened in little isolated snatches. He had gotten drunk that afternoon—“I took on a double helping of Dutch courage” is how he put it—before taking on Linda.

After she left to meet Quentin, he remembered deciding to confront them. On the way to Quentin’s bungalow, he swung into the country club for a couple of quick ones. He could not, he said, remember telling the bartender he could “read about the rest of it in the papers,” or saying anything to him at all. He remembered buying beer in the Handy-Pik, but not the dishtowels. “Why would I want dishtowels?” he asked, and one of the papers reported that three of the lady jurors shuddered.

Later, much later, he speculated to me about the clerk who had testified on the subject of those dishtowels, and I think it’s worth jotting down what he said. “Suppose that, during their canvass for witnesses,” Andy said one day in the exercise yard, “they stumble on this fellow who sold me the beer that night. By then three days have gone by. The facts of the case have been broadsided in all the papers. Maybe they ganged up on the guy, five or six cops, plus the dick from the Attorney General’s office, plus the DA’s assistant. Memory is a pretty subjective thing, Red. They could have started out with ‘Isn’t it possible that he purchased four or five dishtowels?’ and worked their way up from there. If enough people *want* you to remember something, that can be a pretty powerful persuader.”

I agreed that it could.

“But there’s one even more powerful,” Andy went on in that musing way of his. “I think it’s at least possible that he convinced himself. It was the limelight. Reporters asking him questions, his picture in the papers... all topped, of course, by his star turn in court. I’m not saying that he deliberately falsified his story, or perjured himself. I think it’s possible that he could have passed a lie detector test with flying colors, or sworn on his mother’s sacred name that I bought those dishtowels. But still... memory is such a *goddam* subjective thing.

“I know this much: even though my own lawyer thought I had to be lying about half my story, he never bought that business about the dishtowels. It’s crazy

on the face of it. I was pig-drunk, too drunk to have been thinking about muffling the gunshots. If I'd done it, I just would have let them rip."

He went up to the turnout and parked there. He drank beer and smoked cigarettes. He watched the lights downstairs in Quentin's place go out. He watched a single light go on upstairs... and fifteen minutes later he watched that one go out. He said he could guess the rest.

"Mr. Dufresne, did you then go up to Glenn Quentin's house and kill the two of them?" his lawyer thundered.

"No, I did not," Andy answered. By midnight, he said, he was sobering up. He was also feeling the first signs of a bad hangover. He decided to go home and sleep it off and think about the whole thing in a more adult fashion the next day. "At that time, as I drove home, I was beginning to think that the wisest course would be to simply let her go to Reno and get her divorce."

"Thank you, Mr. Dufresne."

The DA popped up.

"You divorced her in the quickest way you could think of, didn't you? You divorced her with a .38 revolver wrapped in dishtowels, didn't you?"

"No, sir, I did not," Andy said calmly.

"And then you shot her lover."

"No, sir."

"You mean you shot Quentin first?"

"I mean I didn't shoot either one of them. I drank two quarts of beer and smoked however many cigarettes the police found at the turnout. Then I drove home and went to bed."

"You told the jury that between August twenty-fourth and September tenth you were feeling suicidal."

"Yes, sir."

"Suicidal enough to buy a revolver."

"Yes."

"Would it bother you overmuch, Mr. Dufresne, if I told you that you do not seem to me to be the suicidal type?"

"No," Andy said, "but you don't impress me as being terribly sensitive, and I doubt very much that, if I *were* feeling suicidal, I would take my problem to you."

There was a slight tense titter in the courtroom at this, but it won him no points with the jury.

“Did you take your thirty-eight with you on the night of September tenth?”

“No; as I’ve already testified—”

“Oh, yes!” The DA smiled sarcastically. “You threw it into the river, didn’t you? The Royal River. On the afternoon of September ninth.”

“Yes, sir.”

“One day before the murders.”

“Yes, sir.”

“That’s convenient, isn’t it?”

“It’s neither convenient nor inconvenient. Only the truth.”

“I believe you heard Lieutenant Mincher’s testimony?” Mincher had been in charge of the party which had dragged the stretch of the Royal near Pond Road Bridge, from which Andy had testified he had thrown the gun. The police had not found it.

“Yes, sir. You know I heard it.”

“Then you heard him tell the court that they found no gun, although they dragged for three days. That was rather convenient, too, wasn’t it?”

“Convenience aside, it’s a fact that they didn’t find the gun,” Andy responded calmly. “But I should like to point out to both you and the jury that the Pond Road Bridge is very close to where the Royal River empties into the Bay of Yarmouth. The current is strong. The gun may have been carried out into the bay itself.”

“And so no comparison can be made between the riflings on the bullets taken from the bloodstained corpses of your wife and Mr. Glenn Quentin and the riflings on the barrel of your gun. That’s correct, isn’t it, Mr. Dufresne?”

“Yes.”

“That’s also rather convenient, isn’t it?”

At that, according to the papers, Andy displayed one of the few slight emotional reactions he allowed himself during the entire six-week period of the trial. A slight, bitter smile crossed his face.

“Since I am innocent of this crime, sir, and since I am telling the truth about throwing my gun into the river the day before the crime took place, then it seems

to me decidedly inconvenient that the gun was never found.”

The DA hammered at him for two days. He re-read the Handy-Pik clerk’s testimony about the dishtowels to Andy. Andy repeated that he could not recall buying them, but admitted that he also couldn’t remember *not* buying them.

Was it true that Andy and Linda Dufresne had taken out a joint insurance policy in early 1947? Yes, that was true. And if acquitted, wasn’t it true that Andy stood to gain fifty thousand dollars in benefits? True. And wasn’t it true that he had gone up to Glenn Quentin’s house with murder in his heart, and wasn’t it *also* true that he had indeed committed murder twice over? No, it was not true. Then what did he think had happened, since there had been no signs of robbery?

“I have no way of knowing that, sir,” Andy said quietly.

The case went to the jury at 1:00 p.m. on a snowy Wednesday afternoon. The twelve jurymen and -women came back in at 3:30. The bailiff said they would have been back earlier, but they had held off in order to enjoy a nice chicken dinner from Bentley’s Restaurant at the county’s expense. They found him guilty, and brother, if Maine had the death-penalty, he would have done the airdance before that spring’s crocuses poked their heads out of the snow.



The DA had asked him what he thought had happened, and Andy slipped the question—but he did have an idea, and I got it out of him late one evening in 1955. It had taken those seven years for us to progress from nodding acquaintances to fairly close friends—but I never felt really close to Andy until 1960 or so, and I believe I was the only one who ever did get really close to him. Both being long-timers, we were in the same cellblock from beginning to end, although I was halfway down the corridor from him.

“What do I think?” He laughed—but there was no humor in the sound. “I think there was a lot of bad luck floating around that night. More than could ever get together in the same short span of time again. I think it must have been some stranger, just passing through. Maybe someone who had a flat tire on that road after I went home. Maybe a burglar. Maybe a psychopath. He killed them, that’s all. And I’m here.”

As simple as that. And he was condemned to spend the rest of his life in Shawshank—or the part of it that mattered. Five years later he began to have parole hearings, and he was turned down just as regular as clockwork in spite of being a model prisoner. Getting a pass out of Shawshank when you've got *murder* stamped on your admittance-slip is slow work, as slow as a river eroding a rock. Seven men sit on the board, two more than at most state prisons, and every one of those seven has an ass as hard as the water drawn up from a mineral-spring well. You can't buy those guys, you can't sweet-talk them, you can't cry for them. As far as the board in here is concerned, money don't talk, and *nobody* walks. There were other reasons in Andy's case as well... but that belongs a little further along in my story.

There was a trusty, name of Kendricks, who was into me for some pretty heavy money back in the fifties, and it was four years before he got it all paid off. Most of the interest he paid me was information—in my line of work, you're dead if you can't find ways of keeping your ear to the ground. This Kendricks, for instance, had access to records I was never going to see running a stamper down in the goddam plate-shop.

Kendricks told me that the parole board vote was 7-0 against Andy Dufresne through 1957, 6-1 in '58; 7-0 again in '59, and 5-2 in '60. After that I don't know, but I do know that sixteen years later he was still in Cell 14 of Cellblock 5. By then, 1975, he was fifty-seven. They probably would have gotten big-hearted and let him out around 1983. They give you life, and that's what they take—all of it that counts, anyway. Maybe they set you loose someday, but... well, listen: I knew this guy, Sherwood Bolton, his name was, and he had this pigeon in his cell. From 1945 until 1953, when they let him out, he had that pigeon. He wasn't any Birdman of Alcatraz; he just had this pigeon. Jake, he called him. He set Jake free a day before he, Sherwood, that is, was to walk, and Jake flew away just as pretty as you could want. But about a week after Sherwood Bolton left our happy little family, a friend of mine called me over to the west corner of the exercise yard, where Sherwood used to hang out. A bird was lying there like a very small pile of dirty bedlinen. It looked starved. My friend said: "Isn't that Jake, Red?" It was. That pigeon was just as dead as a turd.



I remember the first time Andy Dufresne got in touch with me for something; I remember like it was yesterday. That wasn't the time he wanted Rita Hayworth, though. That came later. In the summer of 1948 he came around for something else.

Most of my deals are done right there in the exercise yard, and that's where this one went down. Our yard is big, much bigger than most. It's a perfect square, ninety yards on a side. The north side is the outer wall, with a guard-tower at either end. The guards up there are armed with binoculars and riot guns. The main gate is in that north side. The truck loading-bays are on the south side of the yard. There are five of them. Shawshank is a busy place during the work-week—deliveries in, deliveries out. We have the license-plate factory, and a big industrial laundry that does all the prison wetwash, plus that of Kittery Receiving Hospital and the Eliot Nursing Home. There's also a big automotive garage where mechanic inmates fix prison, state, and municipal vehicles—not to mention the private cars of the screws, the administration offices... and, on more than one occasion, those of the parole board.

The east side is a thick stone wall full of tiny slit windows. Cellblock 5 is on the other side of that wall. The west side is Administration and the infirmary. Shawshank has never been as overcrowded as most prisons, and back in '48 it was only filled to something like two-thirds capacity, but at any given time there might be eighty to a hundred and twenty cons on the yard—playing toss with a football or baseball, shooting craps, jawing at each other, making deals. On Sunday the place was even more crowded; on Sunday the place would have looked like a country holiday... if there had been any women.

It was on a Sunday that Andy first came to me. I had just finished talking to Elmore Armitage, a fellow who often came in handy to me, about a radio when Andy walked up. I knew who he was, of course; he had a reputation for being a snob and a cold fish. People were saying he was marked for trouble already. One of the people saying so was Bogs Diamond, a bad man to have on your case. Andy had no cellmate, and I'd heard that was just the way he wanted it, although people were already saying he thought his shit smelled sweeter than the ordinary. But I don't have to listen to rumors about a man when I can judge him for myself.

“Hello,” he said. “I’m Andy Dufresne.” He offered his hand and I shook it. He wasn’t a man to waste time being social; he got right to the point. “I understand that you’re a man who knows how to get things.”

I agreed that I was able to locate certain items from time to time.

“How do you do that?” Andy asked.

“Sometimes,” I said, “things just seem to come into my hand. I can’t explain it. Unless it’s because I’m Irish.”

He smiled a little at that. “I wonder if you could get me a rock-hammer.”

“What would that be, and why would you want it?”

Andy looked surprised. “Do you make motivations a part of your business?” With words like those I could understand how he had gotten a reputation for being the snobby sort, the kind of guy who likes to put on airs—but I sensed a tiny thread of humor in his question.

“I’ll tell you,” I said. “If you wanted a toothbrush, I wouldn’t ask questions. I’d just quote you a price. Because a toothbrush, you see, is a non-lethal sort of an object.”

“You have strong feelings about lethal objects?”

“I do.”

An old friction-taped baseball flew toward us and he turned, cat-quick, and picked it out of the air. It was a move Frank Malzone would have been proud of. Andy flicked the ball back to where it had come from—just a quick and easy-looking flick of the wrist, but that throw had some mustard on it, just the same. I could see a lot of people were watching us with one eye as they went about their business. Probably the guards in the tower were watching, too. I won’t gild the lily; there are cons that swing weight in any prison, maybe four or five in a small one, maybe two or three dozen in a big one. At Shawshank I was one of those with some weight, and what I thought of Andy Dufresne would have a lot to do with how his time went. He probably knew it, too, but he wasn’t kowtowing or sucking up to me, and I respected him for that.

“Fair enough. I’ll tell you what it is and why I want it. A rock-hammer looks like a miniature pickaxe—about so long.” He held his hands about a foot apart, and that was when I first noticed how neatly kept his nails were. “It’s got a small

sharp pick on one end and a flat, blunt hammerhead on the other. I want it because I like rocks.”

“Rocks,” I said.

“Squat down here a minute,” he said.

I humored him. We hunkered down on our haunches like Indians.

Andy took a handful of exercise yard dirt and began to sift it between his neat hands, so it emerged in a fine cloud. Small pebbles were left over, one or two sparkly, the rest dull and plain. One of the dull ones was quartz, but it was only dull until you’d rubbed it clean. Then it had a nice milky glow. Andy did the cleaning and then tossed it to me. I caught it and named it.

“Quartz, sure,” he said. “And look. Mica. Shale. Silted granite. Here’s a piece of graded limestone, from when they cut this place out of the side of the hill.” He tossed them away and dusted his hands. “I’m a rockhound. At least... I *was* a rockhound. In my old life. I’d like to be one again, on a limited scale.”

“Sunday expeditions in the exercise yard?” I asked, standing up. It was a silly idea, and yet... seeing that little piece of quartz had given my heart a funny tweak. I don’t know exactly why; just an association with the outside world, I suppose. You didn’t think of such things in terms of the yard. Quartz was something you picked out of a small, quick-running stream.

“Better to have Sunday expeditions here than no Sunday expeditions at all,” he said.

“You could plant an item like that rock-hammer in somebody’s skull,” I remarked.

“I have no enemies here,” he said quietly.

“No?” I smiled. “Wait awhile.”

“If there’s trouble, I can handle it without using a rock-hammer.”

“Maybe you want to try an escape? Going under the wall? Because if you do —”

He laughed politely. When I saw the rock-hammer three weeks later, I understood why.

“You know,” I said, “if anyone sees you with it, they’ll take it away. If they saw you with a spoon, they’d take it away. What are you going to do, just sit down here in the yard and start bangin away?”

“Oh, I believe I can do a lot better than that.”

I nodded. That part of it really wasn't my business, anyway. A man engages my services to get him something. Whether he can keep it or not after I get it is his business.

“How much would an item like that go for?” I asked. I was beginning to enjoy his quiet, low-key style. When you've spent ten years in stir, as I had then, you can get awfully tired of the bellowers and the braggarts and the loud-mouths. Yes, I think it would be fair to say I liked Andy from the first.

“Eight dollars in any rock-and-gem shop,” he said, “but I realize that in a business like yours you work on a cost-plus basis—”

“Cost plus ten per cent is my going rate, but I have to go up some on a dangerous item. For something like the gadget you're talking about, it takes a little more goose-grease to get the wheels turning. Let's say ten dollars.”

“Ten it is.”

I looked at him, smiling a little. “Have you *got* ten dollars?”

“I do,” he said quietly.

A long time after, I discovered that he had better than five hundred. He had brought it in with him. When they check you in at this hotel, one of the bellhops is obliged to bend you over and take a look up your works—but there are a lot of works, and, not to put too fine a point on it, a man who is really determined can get a fairly large item quite a ways up them—far enough to be out of sight, unless the bellhop you happen to draw is in the mood to pull on a rubber glove and go prospecting.

“That's fine,” I said. “You ought to know what I expect if you get caught with what I get you.”

“I suppose I should,” he said, and I could tell by the slight change in his gray eyes that he knew exactly what I was going to say. It was a slight lightening, a gleam of his special ironic humor.

“If you get caught, you'll say you found it. That's about the long and short of it. They'll put you in solitary for three or four weeks... plus, of course, you'll lose your toy and you'll get a black mark on your record. If you give them my name, you and I will never do business again. Not for so much as a pair of shoelaces or a bag of Bugler. And I'll send some fellows around to lump you up. I don't like