a legend that got made up around the man, like a pearl around a little piece of grit—I'd have to say that the answer lies somewhere in between. All I know for sure is that Andy Dufresne wasn't much like me or anyone else I ever knew since I came inside. He brought in five hundred dollars jammed up his back porch, but somehow that graymeat son of a bitch managed to bring in something else as well. A sense of his own worth, maybe, or a feeling that he would be the winner in the end . . . or maybe it was only a sense of freedom, even inside these goddamned gray walls. It was a kind of inner light he carried around with him. I only knew him to lose that light once, and that is also a part of this story.

By World Series time of 1950—this was the year the Philadelphia Whiz Kids dropped four straight, you will remember—Andy was having no more trouble from the sisters. Stammas and Hadley had passed the word. If Andy Dufresne came to either of them, or any of the other screws that formed a part of their coterie, and showed so much as a single drop of blood in his underpants, every sister in Shawshank would go to bed that night with a headache. They didn't fight it. As I have pointed out, there was always an eighteen-year-old car thief or a firebug or some guy who'd gotten his kicks handling little children. After the day on the plate-shop roof, Andy went his way and the sisters went theirs.

He was working in the library then, under a tough old con named Brooks Hatlen. Hatlen had gotten the job back in the late twenties because he had a college education. Brooksie's degree was in animal husbandry, true enough, but college educations in institutes of lower learning like The Shank are so rare that it's a case of beggars not being able to be choosers.

In 1952 Brooksie, who had killed his wife and daughter after a losing streak at poker back when Coolidge was President, was paroled. As usual, the State in all its wisdom had let him go long after any chance he might have had to become

a useful part of society was gone. He was sixty-eight and arthritic when he tottered out of the main gate in his Polish suit and his French shoes, his parole papers in one hand and a Greyhound bus ticket in the other. He was crying when he left. Shawshank was his world. What lay beyond its walls was as terrible to Brooks as the Western Seas had been to superstitious fifteenth-century sailors. In prison, Brooksie had been a person of some importance. He was the librarian, an educated man. If he went to the Kittery library and asked for a job, they wouldn't even give him a library card. I heard he died in a home for indigent old folks up Freeport way in 1953, and at that he lasted about six months longer than I thought he would. Yeah, I guess the State got its own back on Brooksie, all right. They trained him to like it inside the shithouse and then they threw him out.

Andy succeeded to Brooksie's job, and he was librarian for twenty-three years. He used the same force of will I'd seen him use on Byron Hadley to get what he wanted for the library, and I saw him gradually turn one small room (which still smelled of turpentine because it had been a paint closet until 1922 and had never been properly aired) lined with Reader's Digest Condensed Books and *National Geographies* into the best prison library in New England.

He did it a step at a time. He put a suggestion box by the door and patiently weeded out such attempts at humor as *More Fuk-Boox Pleeze* and *Excape in 10 EZ Lesions.* He got hold of the things the prisoners seemed serious about. He wrote to the major book clubs in New York and got two of them, The Literary Guild and The Book-of-the-Month Club, to send editions of all their major selections to us at a special cheap rate. He discovered a hunger for information on such small hobbies as soap-carving, woodworking, sleight of hand, and card solitaire. He got all the books he could on such subjects. And those two jailhouse staples, Erie Stanley Gardner and Louis L' Amour. Cons never seem to get enough of the courtroom

or the open range. And yes, he did keep a box of fairly spicy paperbacks under the checkout desk, loaning them out carefully and making sure they always got back. Even so, each new acquisition of that type was quickly read to tatters.

He began to write to the State Senate in Augusta in 1954. Stammas was warden by then, and he used to pretend Andy was some sort of mascot. He was always in the library, shooting the bull with Andy, and sometimes he'd even throw a paternal arm around Andy's shoulders or give him a goose. He didn't fool anybody. Andy Dufresne was no one's mascot.

He told Andy that maybe he'd been a banker on the outside, but that part of his life was receding rapidly into his past and he had better get a hold on the facts of prison life. As far as that bunch of jumped-up Republican Rotarians in Augusta was concerned, there were only three viable expenditures of the taxpayers' money in the field of prisons and corrections. Number one was more walls, number two was more bars, and number three was more guards. As far as the State Senate was concerned, Stammas explained, the folks in Thomaston and Shawshank and Pittsfield and South Portland were the scum of the earth. They were there to do hard time, and by God and Sonny Jesus, it was hard time they were going to do. And if there were a few weevils in the bread, wasn't that just too fucking bad?

Andy smiled his small, composed smile and asked Stammas what would happen to a block of concrete if a drop of water fell on it once every year for a million years. Stammas laughed and clapped Andy on the back. "You got no million years, old horse, but if you did, I bleeve you'd do it with that same little grin on your face. You go on and write your letters. I'll even mail them for you if you pay for the stamps."

Which Andy did. And he had the last laugh, although Stammas and Hadley weren't around to see it. Andy's requests for library funds were routinely turned down until 1960, when he received a check for two hundred dollars—the Senate prob-

ably appropriated it in hopes that he would shut up and go away. Vain hope. Andy felt that he had finally gotten one foot in the door and he simply redoubled his efforts; two letters a week instead of one. In 1962 he got four hundred dollars, and for the rest of the decade the library received seven hundred dollars a year like clockwork. By 1971 that had risen to an even thousand. Not much stacked up against what your average small-town library receives, I guess, but a thousand bucks can buy a lot of recycled Perry Mason stories and Jake Logan Westerns. By the time Andy left, you could go into the library (expanded from its original paint-locker to three rooms), and find just about anything you'd want. And if you couldn't find it, chances were good that Andy could get it for you.

Now you're asking yourself if all this came about just because Andy told Byron Hadley how to save the taxes on his windfall inheritance. The answer is yes . . . and no. You can probably figure out what happened for yourself.

Word got around that Shawshank was housing its very own pet financial wizard. In the late spring and the summer of 1950, Andy set up two trust funds for guards who wanted to assure a college education for their kids, he advised a couple of others who wanted to take small fliers in common stock (and they did pretty damn well, as things turned out; one of them did so well he was able to take an early retirement two years later), and I'll be damned if he didn't advise the warden himself, old Lemon Lips George Dunahy, on how to go about setting up a tax-shelter for himself. That was just before Dunahy got the bum's rush, and I believe he must have been dreaming about all the millions his book was going to make him. By April of 1951, Andy was doing the tax returns for half the screws at Shawshank, and by 1952, he was doing almost all of them. He was paid in what may be a prison's most valuable coin: simple good will.

Later on, after Greg Stammas took over the warden's office, Andy became even more important—but if I tried to tell you

the specifics of just how, I'd be guessing. There are some things I know about and others I can only guess at. I know that there were some prisoners who received all sorts of special considerations—radios in their cells, extraordinary visiting privileges, things like that—and there were people on the outside who were paying for them to have those privileges. Such people are known as "angels" by the prisoners. All at once some fellow would be excused from working in the plate-shop on Saturday forenoons, and you'd know that fellow had an angel out there who'd coughed up a chunk of dough to make sure it happened. The way it usually works is that the angel will pay the bribe to some middle-level screw, and the screw will spread the grease both up and down the administrative ladder.

Then there was the discount auto-repair service that laid Warden Dunahy low. It went underground for awhile and then emerged stronger than ever in the late fifties. And some of the contractors that worked at the prison from time to time were paying kickbacks to the top administration officials, I'm pretty sure, and the same was almost certainly true of the companies whose equipment was bought and installed in the laundry and the license-plate shop and the stamping-mill that was built in 1963.

By the late sixties there was also a booming trade in pills, and the same administrative crowd was involved in turning a buck on that. All of it added up to a pretty good-sized river of illicit income. Not like the pile of clandestine bucks that must fly around a really big prison like Attica or San Quentin, but not peanuts, either. And money itself becomes a problem after awhile. You can't just stuff it into your wallet and then shell out a bunch of crumpled twenties and dog-eared tens when you want a pool built in your back yard or an addition put on your house. Once you get past a certain point, you have to explain where that money came from . . . and if your explanations aren't convincing enough, you're apt to wind up wearing a number yourself.

So there was a need for Andy's services. They took him out of the laundry and installed him in the library, but if you wanted to look at it another away, they never took him out of the laundry at all. They just set him to work washing dirty money instead of dirty sheets. He funnelled it into stocks, bonds, tax-free municipals, you name it.

He told me once about ten years after that day on the plate-shop roof that his feelings about what he was doing were pretty clear, and that his conscience was relatively untroubled. The rackets would have gone on with him or without him. He had not asked to be sent to Shawshank, he went on; he was an innocent man who had been victimized by colossal bad luck, not a missionary or a do-gooder.

"Besides, Red," he told me with that same half-grin, "what I'm doing in here isn't all *that* different from what I was doing outside. I'll hand you a pretty cynical axiom: the amount of expert financial help an individual or company needs rises in direct proportion to how many people that person or business is screwing.

"The people who run this place are stupid, brutal monsters for the most part. The people who run the straight world are brutal and monstrous, but they happen not to be quite as stupid, because the standard of competence out there is a little higher. Not much, but a little."

"But the pills," I said. "I don't want to tell you your business, but they make me nervous. Reds, uppers, downers, Nembutals—now they've got these things they call Phase Fours. I won't get anything like that. Never have."

"No," Andy said. "I don't like the pills, either. Never have. But I'm not much of a one for cigarettes or booze, either. But I don't push the pills. I don't bring them in, and I don't sell them once they are in. Mostly it's the screws who do that."

"But—"

"Yeah, I know. There's a fine line there. What it comes down to, Red, is some people refuse to get their hands dirty at all.

That's called sainthood, and the pigeons land on your shoulders and crap all over your shirt. The other extreme is to take a bath in the dirt and deal any goddamned thing that will turn a dollar—guns, switchblades, big H, what the hell. You ever have a con come up to you and offer you a contract?"

I nodded. It's happened a lot of times over the years. You are, after all, the man who can get it. And they figure if you can get them batteries for their transistor radios or cartons of Luckies or lids of reefer, you can put them in touch with a guy who'll use a knife.

"Sure you have," Andy agreed. "But you don't do it. Because guys like us, Red, we know there's a third choice. An alternative to staying simon-pure or bathing in the filth and the slime. It's the alternative that grown-ups all over the world pick. You balance off your walk through the hog-wallow against what it gains you. You choose the lesser of two evils and try to keep your good intentions in front of you. And I guess you judge how well you're doing by how well you sleep at night . . . and what your dreams are like."

"Good intentions," I said, and laughed. "I know all about that, Andy. A fellow can toddle right off to hell on that road."

"Don't you believe it," he said, growing somber. "This is hell right here. Right here in The Shank. They sell pills and I tell them what to do with the money. But I've also got the library, and I know of over two dozen guys who have used the books in there to help them pass their high school equivalency tests. Maybe when they get out of here they'll be able to crawl off the shitheap. When we needed that second room back in 1957, I got it. Because they want to keep me happy. I work cheap. That's the trade-off."

"And you've got your own private quarters."

"Sure. That's the way I like it."

The prison population had risen slowly all through the fifties, and it damn near exploded in the sixties, what with every college-kid in America wanting to try dope and the perfectly

ridiculous penalties for the use of a little reefer. But in all that time Andy never had a cellmate, except for a big, silent Indian named Normaden (like all Indians in The Shank, he was called Chief), and Normaden didn't last long. A lot of the other long-timers thought Andy was crazy, but Andy just smiled. He lived alone and he liked it that way . . . and as he'd said, they liked to keep him happy. He worked cheap.

Prison time is slow time, sometimes you'd swear it's stop-time, but it passes. It passes. George Dunahy departed the scene in a welter of newspaper headlines shouting scandal and nest-feathering. Stammas succeeded him, and for the next six years Shawshank was a kind of living hell. During the reign of Greg Stammas, the beds in the infirmary and the cells in the Solitary Wing were always full.

One day in 1958 I looked at myself in a small shaving mirror I kept in my cell and saw a forty-year-old man looking back at me. A kid had come in back in 1938, a kid with a big mop of carroty red hair, half-crazy with remorse, thinking about suicide. That kid was gone. The red hair was going gray and starting to recede. There were crow's tracks around the eyes. On that day I could see an old man inside, waiting his time to come out. It scared me. Nobody wants to grow old in stir.

Stammas went early in 1959. There had been several investigative reporters sniffing around, and one of them even did four months under an assumed name, for a crime made up out of whole cloth. They were getting ready to drag out scandal and nest-feathering again, but before they could bring the hammer down on him, Stammas ran. I can understand that; boy, can I ever. If he had been tried and convicted, he could have ended up right in here. If so, he might have lasted all of five hours. Byron Hadley had gone two years earlier. The sucker had a heart attack and took an early retirement.

Andy never got touched by the Stammas affair. In early 1959 a new warden was appointed, and a new assistant war-

den, and a new chief of guards. For the next eight months or so, Andy was just another con again. It was during that period that Normaden, the big half-breed Passamaquoddy, shared Andy's cell with him. Then everything just started up again. Normaden was moved out, and Andy was living in solitary splendor again. The names at the top change, but the rackets never do.

I talked to Normaden once about Andy. "Nice fella," Normaden said. It was hard to make out anything he said because he had a harelip and a cleft palate; his words all came out in a slush. "I liked it there. He never made fun. But he didn't want me there. I could tell." Big shrug. "I was glad to go, me. Bad draft in that cell. All the time cold. He don't let nobody touch his things. That's okay. Nice man, never made fun. But big draft."

Rita Hayworth hung in Andy's cell until 1955, if I remember right. Then it was Marilyn Monroe, that picture from *The Seven-Year Itch* where she's standing over a subway grating and the warm air is flipping her skirt up. Marilyn lasted until 1960, and she was considerably tattered about the edges when Andy replaced her with Jayne Mansfield. Jayne was, you should pardon the expression, a bust. After only a year or so she was replaced with an English actress—might have been Hazel Court, but I'm not sure. In 1966 that one came down and Raquel Welch went up for a record-breaking six-year engagement in Andy's cell. The last poster to hang there was a pretty country-rock singer whose name was Linda Ronstadt.

I asked him once what the posters meant to him, and he gave me a peculiar, surprised sort of look. "Why, they mean the same thing to me as they do to most cons, I guess," he said. "Freedom. You look at those pretty women and you feel like you could almost . . . not quite but *almost* . . . step right through and be beside them. Be free. I guess that's why I always liked Raquel Welch the best. It wasn't just her; it was

that beach she was standing on. Looked like she was down in Mexico somewhere. Someplace quiet, where a man would be able to hear himself think. Didn't you ever feel that way about a picture, Red? That you could almost step right through it?"

I said I'd never really thought of it that way.

"Maybe someday you'll see what I mean," he said, and he was right. Years later I saw exactly what he meant . . . and when I did, the first thing I thought of was Normaden, and about how he'd said it was always cold in Andy's cell.

A terrible thing happened to Andy in late March or early April of 1963. I have told you that he had something that most of the other prisoners, myself included, seemed to lack. Call it a sense of equanimity, or a feeling of inner peace, maybe even a constant and unwavering faith that someday the long nightmare would end. Whatever you want to call it, Andy Dufresne always seemed to have his act together. There was none of that sullen desperation about him that seems to afflict most lifers after awhile; you could never smell hopelessness on him. Until that late winter of '63.

We had another warden by then, a man named Samuel Norton. The Mathers, Cotton and Increase, would have felt right at home with Sam Norton. So far as I know, no one had ever seen him so much as crack a smile. He had a thirty-year pin from the Baptist Advent Church of Eliot. His major innovation as the head of our happy family was to make sure that each incoming prisoner had a New Testament. He had a small plaque on his desk, gold letters inlaid in teakwood, which said CHRIST IS MY SAVIOR. A sampler on the wall, made by his wife, read: HIS JUDGMENT COMETH AND THAT RIGHT EARLY. This latter sentiment cut zero ice with most of us. We felt that the judgment had already occurred, and we would be willing to testify with the best of them that the rock would not hide us nor the dead tree give us shelter. He had a Bible quote for every occasion, did Mr. Sam Norton, and whenever you meet a

man like that, my best advice to you would be to grin big and cover up your balls with both hands.

There were less infirmary cases than in the days of Greg Stammas, and so far as I know the moonlight burials ceased altogether, but this is not to say that Norton was not a believer in punishment. Solitary was always well populated. Men lost their teeth not from beatings but from bread and water diets. It began to be called grain and drain, as in "I'm on the Sam Norton grain and drain train, boys."

The man was the foulest hypocrite that I ever saw in a high position. The rackets I told you about earlier continued to flourish, but Sam Norton added his own new wrinkles. Andy knew about them all, and because we had gotten to be pretty good friends by that time, he let me in on some of them. When Andy talked about them, an expression of amused, disgusted wonder would come over his face, as if he were telling me about some ugly, predatory species of bug that was, by its very ugliness and greed, somehow more comic than terrible.

It was Warden Norton who instituted the "Inside-Out" program you may have read about some sixteen or seventeen years back; it was even written up in *Newsweek*. In the press it sounded like a real advance in practical corrections and rehabilitation. There were prisoners out cutting pulpwood, prisoners repairing bridges and causeways, prisoners constructing potato cellars. Norton called it "Inside-Out" and was invited to explain it to damn near every Rotary and Kiwanis club in New England, especially after he got his picture in *Newsweek*. The prisoners called it "road-ganging," but so far as I know, none of them were ever invited to express their views to the Kiwanians or the Loyal Order of Moose.

Norton was right in there on every operation, thirty-year hurch-pin and all; from cutting pulp to digging storm-drains o laying new culverts under state highways, there was Norton, skimming off the top. There were a hundred ways to do —men, materials, you name it. But he had it coming another

way, as well. The construction businesses in the area were deathly afraid of Norton's Inside-Out program, because prison labor is slave labor, and you can't compete with that. So Sam Norton, he of the Testaments and the thirty-year church-pin, was passed a good many thick envelopes under the table during his sixteen-year tenure as Shawshank's warden. And when an envelope was passed, he would either overbid the project, not bid at all, or claim that all his Inside-Outers were committed elsewhere. It has always been something of a wonder to me that Norton was never found in the trunk of a Thunderbird parked off a highway somewhere down in Massachusetts with his hands tied behind his back and half a dozen bullets in his head.

Anyway, as the old barrelhouse song says, My God, how the money rolled in. Norton must have subscribed to the old Puritan notion that the best way to figure out which folks God favors is by checking their bank accounts.

Andy Dufresne was his right hand in all of this, his silent partner. The prison library was Andy's hostage to fortune. Norton knew it, and Norton used it. Andy told me that one of Norton's favorite aphorisms was *One hand washes the other.* So Andy gave good advice and made useful suggestions. I can't say for sure that he hand-tooled Norton's Inside-Out program, but I'm damned sure he processed the money for the Jesus-shouting son of a whore. He gave good advice, made useful suggestions, the money got spread around, and . . . son of a bitch! The library would get a new set of automotive repair manuals, a fresh set of Grolier Encyclopedias, books on how to prepare for the Scholastic Achievement Tests. And, of course, more Erie Stanley Gardners and more Louis L'Amours.

And I'm convinced that what happened happened because Norton just didn't want to lose his good right hand. I'll go further: it happened because he was scared of what might happen—what Andy might say against him—if Andy ever got clear of Shawshank State Prison.

I got the story a chunk here and a chunk there over a space of seven years, some of it from Andy—but not all. He never wanted to talk about that part of his life, and I don't blame him. I got parts of it from maybe half a dozen different sources. I've said once that prisoners are nothing but slaves, but they have that slave habit of looking dumb and keeping their ears open. I got it backwards and forwards and in the middle, but I'll give it to you from point A to point Z, and maybe you'll understand why the man spent about ten months in a bleak, depressed daze. See, I don't think he knew the truth until 1963, fifteen years after he came into this sweet little hell-hole. Until he met Tommy Williams, I don't think he knew how bad it could get.

Tommy Williams joined our happy little Shawshank family in November of 1962. Tommy thought of himself as a native of Massachusetts, but he wasn't proud; in his twenty-seven years he'd done time all over New England. He was a professional thief, and as you may have guessed, my own feeling was that he should have picked another profession.

He was a married man, and his wife came to visit each and every week. She had an idea that things might go better with Tommy—and consequently better with their three-year-old son and herself—if he got his high school degree. She talked him into it, and so Tommy Williams started visiting the library on a regular basis.

For Andy, this was an old routine by then. He saw that Tommy got a series of high school equivalency tests. Tommy would brush up on the subjects he had passed in high school—there weren't many—and then take the test. Andy also saw that he was enrolled in a number of correspondence courses covering the subjects he had failed in school or just missed by dropping out.

He probably wasn't the best student Andy ever took over the jumps, and I don't know if he ever did get his high school