

biblical folds. With a faint cry of dismay Doña Rita stopped just within my room.

The two women faced each other for a few moments silently. Therese spoke first. There was no austerity in her tone. Her voice was as usual, pertinacious, unfeeling, with a slight plaint in it; terrible in its unchanged purpose.

"I have been standing here before this door all night," she said. "I don't know how I lived through it. I thought I would die a hundred times for shame. So that's how you are spending your time? You are worse than shameless. But God may still forgive you. You have a soul. You are my sister. I will never abandon you—till you die."

"What is it?" Doña Rita was heard wistfully, "my soul or this house that you won't abandon."

"Come out and bow your head in humiliation. I am your sister and I shall help you to pray to God and all the Saints. Come away from that poor young gentleman who like all the others can have nothing but contempt and disgust for you in his heart. Come and hide your head where no one will reproach you—but I, your sister. Come out and beat your breast: come, poor Sinner, and let me kiss you, for you are my sister!"

While Therese was speaking Doña Rita stepped back a pace and as the other moved forward still extending the hand of sisterly love, she slammed the door in Therese's face. "You abominable girl!" she cried fiercely. Then she turned about and walked towards me who had not moved. I felt hardly alive but for the cruel pain that possessed my whole being. On the way she stooped to pick up the arrow of gold and then moved on quicker, holding it out to me in her open palm.

"You thought I wouldn't give it to you. *Amigo*, I wanted nothing so much as to give it to you. And now, perhaps—you will take it."