

The dream was growing in distinctness. They three—he and the girl and the woman—were in a house. It was a beautiful old house, in the country. Outside it was black and white, with elaborate patterns of oak on plaster. A sheet of water lay so near that the black and white front was reflected in it, like a dream within a dream. The calm water was asleep, and dreaming the house; and some great dark trees and clumps of rhododendrons were dreaming also, which seemed very confusing, and made him doubt whether there were any such soul as his, or whether after all he were only the spirit of the water or the trees, and had never known this girl who was walking with the ugly man. Yet it seemed to be the ugly man's house, and he knew what the man was thinking. They were one and the same, at all events in the dream. And though he was out of doors with the girl, he could see every room in the house as plainly as he could see the lake and the trees and the pink rhododendrons. He seemed to pass through each room, one after another, because the girl was extolling the charm of the house, and