The hills across the valley of the Ebro\* were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain, made of strings of bamboo beads, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out flies. The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade, outside the building. It was very hot and the express from Barcelona would come in forty minutes. It stopped at this junction for two minutes and went on to Madrid. "What should we drink?" the girl asked. She had taken off her hat and put it on the table. "It's pretty hot," the man said. "Let's drink beer." "Dos cervezas," the man said into the curtain. "Big ones?" a woman asked from the doorway. "Yes. Two big ones." The woman brought two glasses of beer and two felt pads. She put the felt pads and the beer glasses on the table and looked at the man and the girl. The girl was looking off at the line of hills. They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry. "They look like white elephants," she said. "I've never seen one," the man drank his beer. "No, you wouldn't have." "I might have," the man said. "Just because you say I wouldn't have doesn't prove anything." The girl looked at the bead curtain. "They've painted something on it," she said. "What does it say?" "Anis del Toro. It's a drink." \* River in the north of Spain 2 "Could we try it?" The man called "Listen" through the curtain. The woman came out from the bar. "Four reales." "We want two Anis del Toro." "With water?" "Do you want it with water?" "I don't know," the girl said. "Is it good with water?" "It's all right." "You want them with water?" asked the woman. "Yes, with water." "It tastes like licorice," the girl said and put the glass down. "That's the way with everything." "Yes," said the girl. "Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all the things you've waited so long for, like absinthe." "Oh, cut it out." "You started it," the girl said. "I was being amused. I was having a fine time."