

Conversation; or, Pilgrims' Progress: A Novel

Conrad Aiken



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Conversation; or, Pilgrims' Progress: A Novel Conrad Aiken A painter torn between his domestic arrangements and his artistic pursuits makes a fateful choice in this brilliant and provocative novel from a winner of the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize

Timothy Kane brought his wife and young daughter to Cape Cod in order to find the peace and quiet necessary to paint. But the mood inside their small cottage is far from tranquil—a past affair weighs on Timothy's conscience, and the strain of running a household by herself is causing Enid to resent her husband.

To make matters worse, Timothy's friend Jim Connor has decided to move to the Cape and bring a gaggle of their Greenwich Village acquaintances with him. A committed anarchist, Jim does more than just preach the redistribution of wealth: He accomplishes it himself by shoplifting from department stores and giving the loot to struggling poets and painters. Jim and his rabble-rousing, art-obsessed crew stir up trouble wherever they go, and Timothy's association with the group soon becomes a major point of contention between him and Enid. She expects him to sacrifice his friendship for the sake of his family's security—a demand that runs counter to Timothy's nature and his sense of what it means to be an artist. With the pressure mounting, he must find a way to balance his marriage and his work, or risk devastating consequences to both.

An exquisitely crafted story about the hard truths of the creative life, *Conversation* has been lauded by the *New York Times* as a testament to "the brilliance of [Conrad Aiken's] mind and the understanding of his heart."

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